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Collier's

CHRISTMAS ANNUAL

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December 24, 1949

Ten Christmas Classics

Dec. 24, 1949

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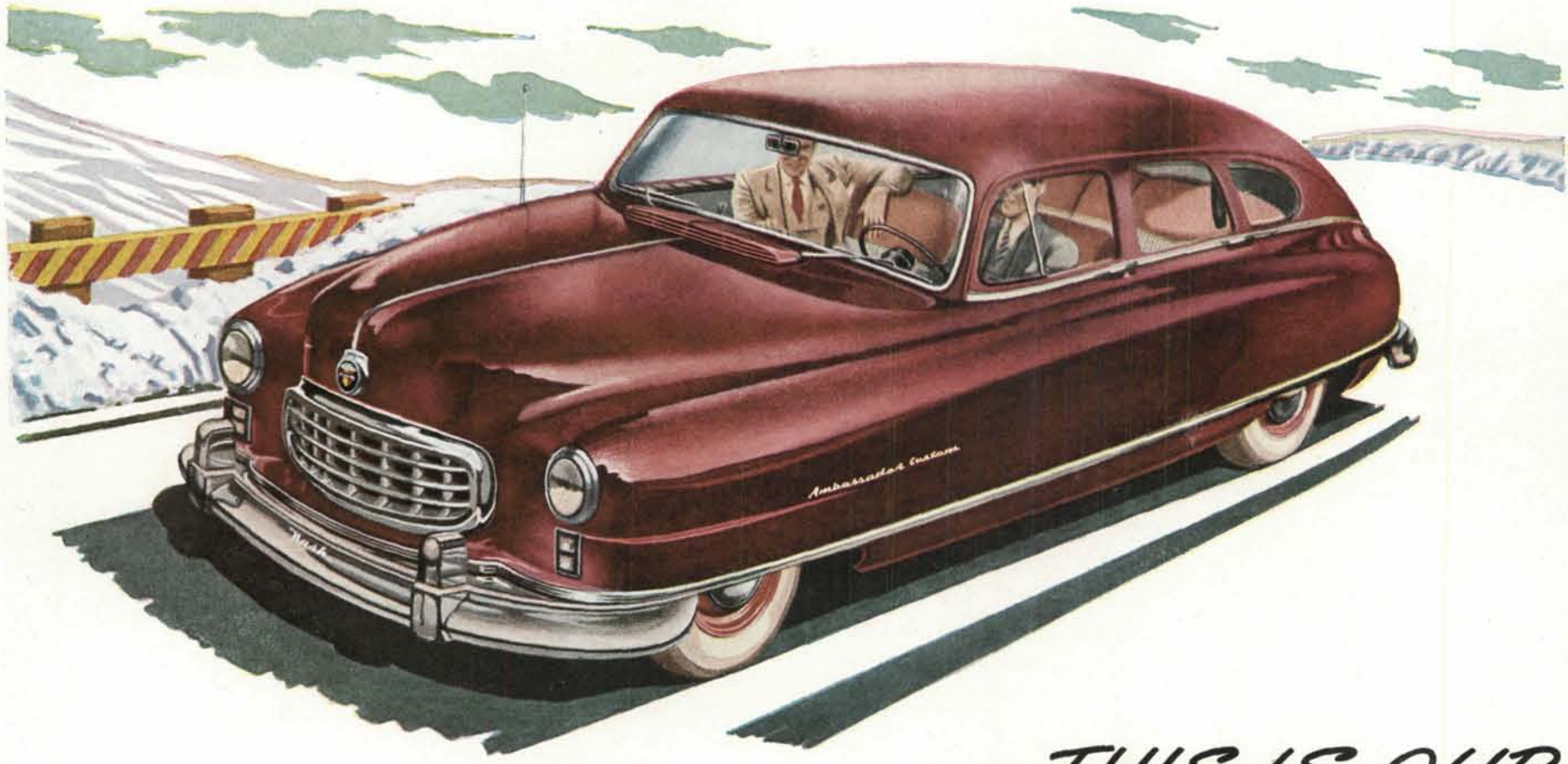

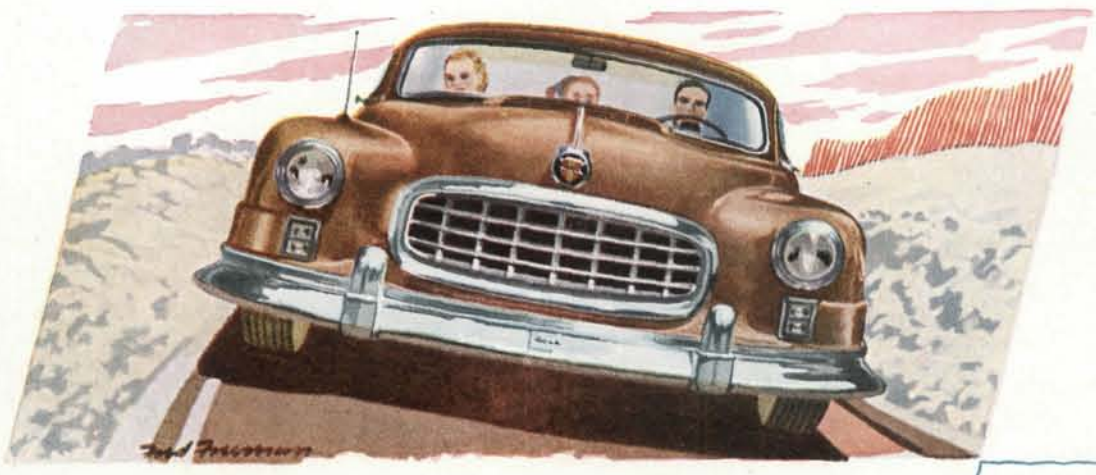

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***This is our challenge**—five minutes in a 1950 Nash Airflyte will completely change any idea you ever had about how an automobile rides—drives—performs.*

Airflyte Construction is the reason—the rigidity and strength of streamline train construction now applied to an automobile.

Gone are the rattles and squeaks of ordinary body and frame construction . . . up goes safety, and long life, too.

Up goes performance! Up goes gasoline mileage, up to 30% more! And here's a ride never possible before.

Head for the worst road you know. There's *new* Super-Compression power that whisks you along like a comet. Slam over the bumps—romp around the curves without weave or wobble. That's Airflyte double rigidity.

You cut the air with 20.7% less air drag than does the average current car. That's Airflyte design.

And you get more than 25 miles to the gallon in the big Statesman Airflyte, at average highway speed.

Now—Hydra-Matic Drive

Your Nash dealer invites you to take an Airflyte ride. Try the new Ambassador Airflyte with Hydra-Matic Drive and exclusive Selecto-Lift starting.

And remember—*new lower prices*, too!

ONLY NASH HAS AIRFLYTE CONSTRUCTION!

Alone in Nash, the entire frame and body, floor, roof, rear fenders, pillars are built as a single, rigid welded unit, squeak-free and rattle-proof. It has 1½ to 2½ times the torsional strength of ordinary automobile construction. Gives new safety, new economy, makes possible a softer, smoother ride—stays new years longer, adds to re-sale value.

NEW! Thrilling as the Airflyte ride is the Sky-Liner Interior with the new Airplane-type Recliner Seat with 5-way adjustment . . . Twin Beds . . . Roll-a-Lock dash panel door . . . Pull-out Glove Locker . . . the improved Weather Eye Conditioned Air System . . . the safety of the Uniscope and Cockpit Control.

Nash Motors, Division Nash-Kelvinator Corp., Detroit, Mich.

There's Much of Tomorrow In All Nash Does Today

Nash AIRFLYTE

The Ambassador ★ The Statesman

Great Cars Since 1902

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Living Symbols of our Faith

They help us find self-contentment — to find security of the soul and of the family.

No matter of what creed we are, no matter where we are, they are there to give us counsel, guidance, aid.

Theirs is the helping hand stretched out to us in our moments of spiritual and physical travail.

We turn to them in our hours of darkness and despair — and they are always there.

They are the living symbols of our faith — of our strength.

They are always one with us . . . proudly Soldiers and Airmen . . . proudly serving our Nation.

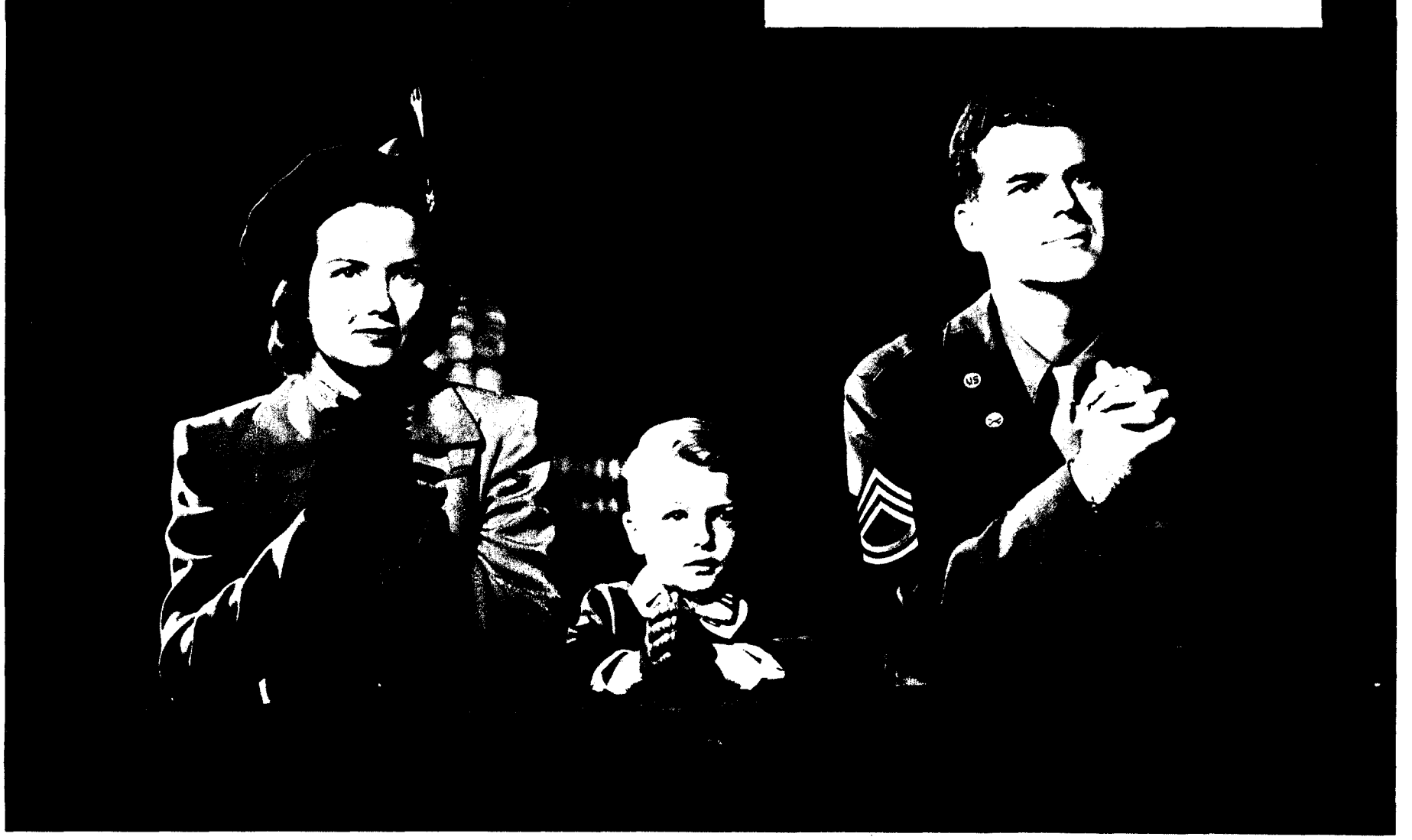
They show us the way.

They are the Chaplains of the U. S. Army and the U. S. Air Force.

Every week there are regular services all over the world in the Chapels of the U. S. Army and the U. S. Air Force for Soldiers and Airmen and their families, whether they be Protestant, Catholic or Jewish.

They grow in their spiritual lives under the guidance of these living symbols of our faith, the Chaplains of the U. S. Army and the U. S. Air Force.

U. S. ARMY AND U. S. AIR FORCE



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here's why Motorola FM sounds so much better!

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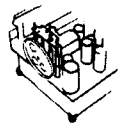
A radar type permeability tuner that inhibits "drift"... Keeps the FM station in constant tune.



2 SWEEP STATION DIAL

Puts more distance between stations—makes tuning easier, more precise. A big advantage in FM tuning.

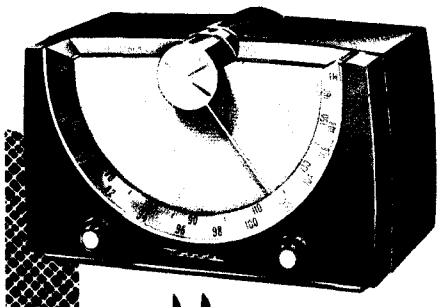
3 TUNED RF STAGE for FM

Gives greater sensitivity—knifes through local stations to bring in distant stations sharp and clear.

4 NEW IMPROVED SPEAKERS

Motorola's "Golden Voice" is now even richer, more vibrant than ever.

let your own ear decide... see your Motorola dealer today



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OVER 20 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT

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December 24, 1949

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The Cover

Water-colorist John Pike, who lives in Woodstock, New York, says this traditional scene could be credited to almost any part of America. A member of the National Academy, recipient of an American Water Color Society award and holder of 14 one-man shows, the 38-year-old artist is also an accomplished speaker, singer and guitarist.

Week's Mail

Two More Squawks

EDITOR: Your editorial, Squawk (Nov. 12th), fails to mention two gross injustices in the federal excise tax law. Why under the sun should there be a tax on alarm clocks? Nothing is less a luxury. People who can afford the dollar-a-cake perfumed soap don't need those pesky things. But my principal gripe is the tax on women's purses. Regardless of price or material, all purses, as well as wallets, coin purses and billfolds, are taxed.

Men's suits have 13 pockets. Except in winter coats, women have none. We need those to stow away our gloves. Women have to carry about as many Social Security cards, driver's licenses, etc., as men do. No pockets. We must have a handbag. This vital necessity should not be taxable unless it is high enough priced to be in the luxury class. HAZEL HARRINGTON, Detroit, Mich.

. . . I think it's high time that this luxury tax be repealed. During the emergency it was undoubtedly necessary, but the emergency is over and the tax continues. Why?

I have two small children and it falls to me occasionally to do the shopping. If baby powder or baby oil is on the list, it means an added 20 per cent for luxury tax. I can't help but wonder: Since when is a sore bottom a luxury? Let's have more articles on the same problem. My congratulations on a fine magazine.

J. W. KLOECKNER, Dilworth, Minn.

Collier's feels strongly about these wartime excise taxes and will have more to say on the subject in the Jan. 7th issue.

The Twain Do Meet

EDITOR: I note some of your correspondents are having a friendly argument (Week's Mail, Nov. 12th) as to "How Far Is West?"

That question was answered a long time ago by the Chinese proverb that "too far East is West." GEORGE H. GOEBEL, Daytona Beach, Fla.

Disillusioned

EDITOR: I read Ingrid's Rossellini (Nov. 12th) for one reason: I wanted to find some justification—even explanation—for what she did. I failed to find it. I'm sorry I failed, because I've never enjoyed any one star's performances as I have those of Miss Bergman. But the news about Rossellini spoiled her saintly performance in Joan of Arc for me.

JOHN M. KELLY, El Cajon, Cal.

. . . Ingrid had everything, including the love of nearly all moving-picture fans. Now she "has had it" and Collier's has so little else to print that it has to whitewash her actions with so much drivel.

M. W. HUNT, Point Pleasant, N. J.

Fan Mail for the General

EDITOR: I thank you for printing My 4-Year War with the Reds (Nov. 5th). I don't know if you know Frank Howley, but I do. I have seen him work and I have seen the results of his work. Any promotion he has received in the armed forces has been

(Continued on page 8)

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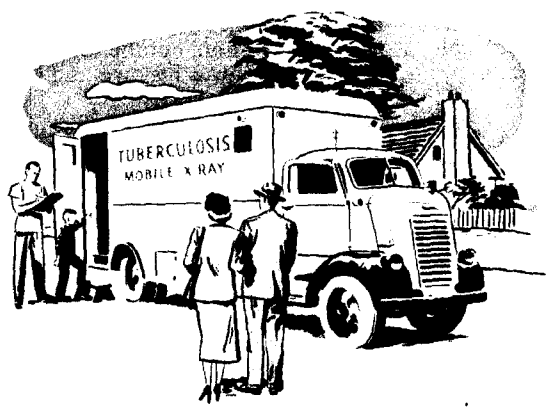
PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST

TUBERCULOSIS

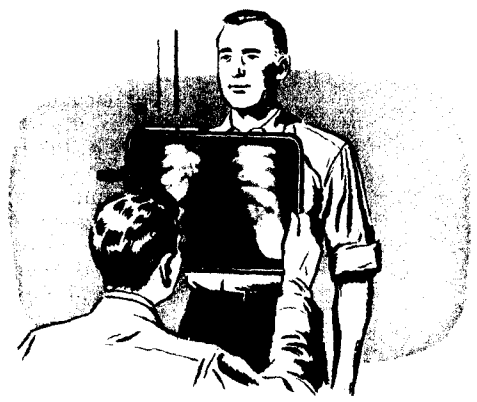
THE OUTLOOK for controlling tuberculosis grows brighter each year. In fact, the death rate from this disease has declined more than 80 per cent since 1900 and more than one third from 1940 through 1948.

Authorities emphasize, however, that continued improvement in the mortality from tuberculosis depends upon *finding every case, treating it promptly, and preventing the spread of infection to others.* They also hope that further technological developments will prove valuable in the treatment of this disease.



Efforts toward early discovery

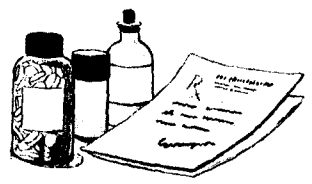
New tuberculosis cases are being discovered in greater numbers than heretofore as a result of modern diagnostic techniques. In fact, during the past 8 years, the number of new cases actually reported *increased* by nearly one third. This reflects the progress that physicians, health authorities, and others are making in their efforts to discover tuberculosis *early*. For example, some ten million people in our country are now being X-rayed each year to help protect themselves and their families.



In addition to X-rays, other diagnostic aids such as tuberculin tests and fluoroscopic examinations make it possible to discover tuberculosis early and commence treatment before it spreads.

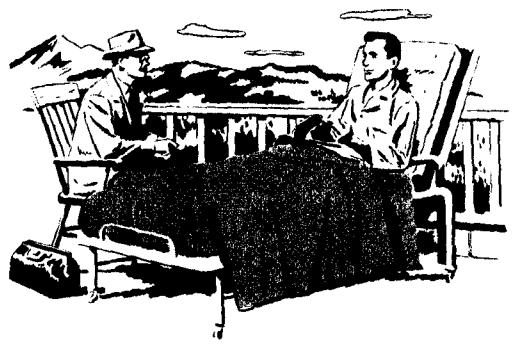
Old and New Weapons help in the fight

Rest in bed, preferably in a sanatorium or tuberculosis hospital, is still considered to be an important method of treatment. The use of surgery in some tuberculosis cases has proved to be beneficial; in fact there are now several operations which may give diseased lung areas extra rest.



There is evidence that the next great advance against tuberculosis may come through treatment with new drugs. One type has already been used successfully in some forms of the disease. Other promising drugs are being tested in the laboratory.

Experiments with a vaccine offer the hope that its use will help certain individuals to build resistance against this disease.



If tuberculosis is discovered early, and treated promptly and properly, there is an excellent chance that it can be controlled. In this event, the patient who carefully follows his doctor's advice and adjusts his living habits accordingly, can generally return to a nearly normal life.

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Please send me a copy of your booklet, 10-C, "Tuberculosis."

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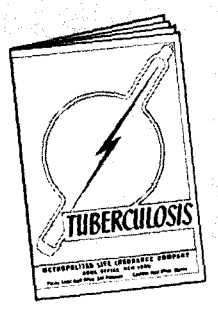

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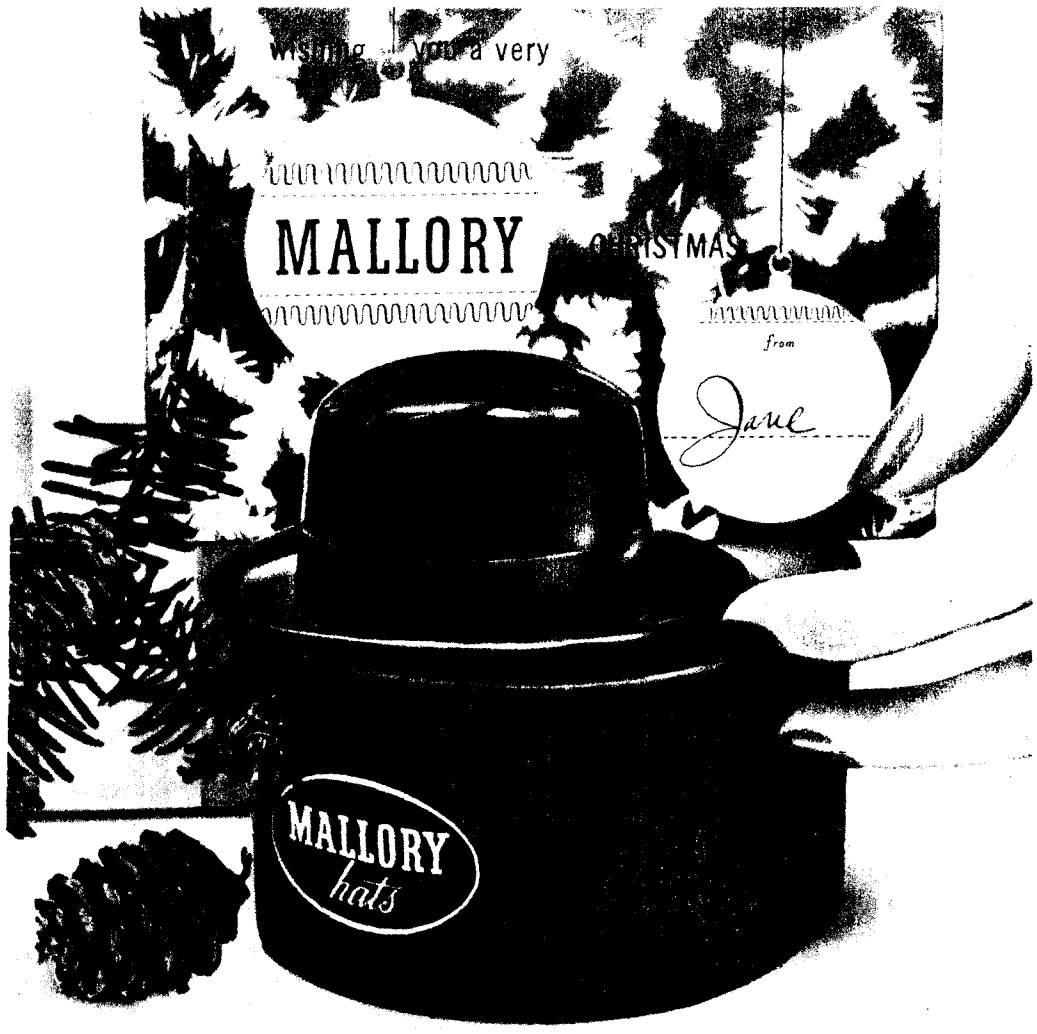


a Mallory gift certificate

will make his Christmas merrier

Lady, oh lady will you have fun giving him this gaily boxed Mallory miniature and Christmas-sy gift certificate! A minute at your nearest Mallory dealer's, a minute to wrap, and pop in the top of his stocking. And man, oh man will he have fun choosing the Mallory he wants. It might be the Mallory Pliafelt* Chatham shown below—a favorite for its smart good looks. Mallory Hats are priced from $7.50 to $20.

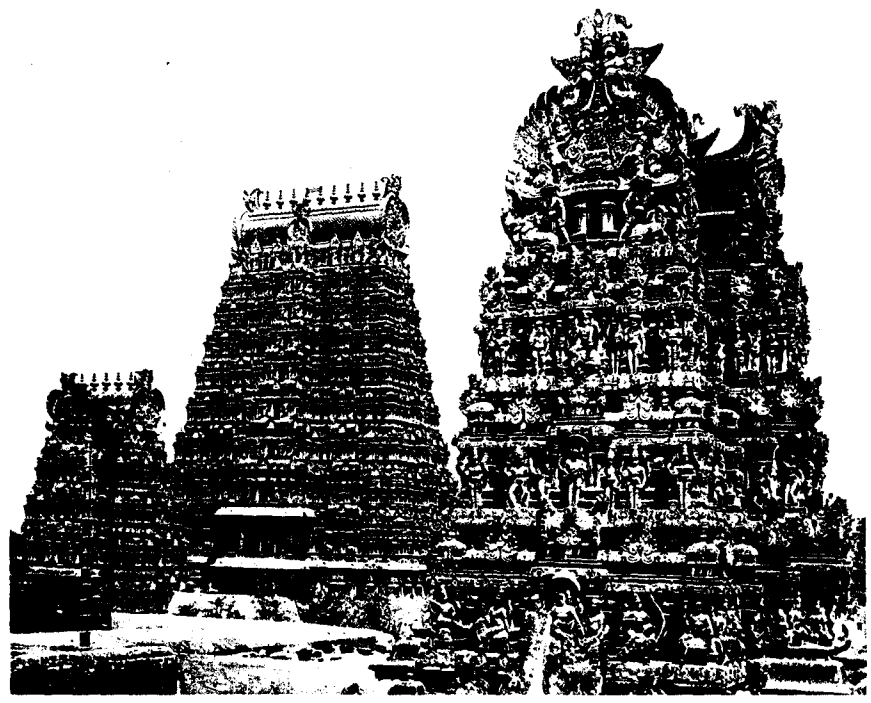
*Registered Trademark

MALLORY hats DANBURY, CONN. • ALSO MADE IN CANADA • FINE HATS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

The MALLORY "Chatham," $15

Keep Up with the World

BY FRELING FOSTER



The largest and most elaborately decorated structure of its kind in the world is the main gateway to the grounds of the Hindu Temple of Minarchi in Madura, India *(above)*. Resembling a huge monument, it occupies an area of about 5,000 square feet, is 13 stories high and has some 30,000,000 figures of gods and animals carved on its exterior walls.

The worst railroad accident of this generation occurred at Lagny, France, 15 miles east of Paris, at nine o'clock on Christmas Eve, 1933. Being late, the Paris-Strasbourg Express was traveling at a high speed when it crashed into the rear end of the Paris-Nancy Express, which had stopped. In a matter of seconds, 200 were killed and 300 injured, the majority being young people who were going home for the holidays. The engineer of the Strasbourg train was solely responsible for the terrible disaster through carelessness that defies understanding. At the time of the accident, according to the speed-recording device in his cab, the train was hitting 65 miles an hour, despite the fact that, owing to a dense fog, the engineer could not see a single signal.

Probably the only criminal who escaped twice from guards taking him to a federal penitentiary was Roy Gardner, a West Coast specialist in mail holdups some 30 years ago. Both times he was being taken to McNeil Island, Washington. As the train neared its destination on the night of June 8, 1920, Gardner snatched a gun from one of the two guards and ordered the other prisoner to take their keys and unlock his handcuffs and leg irons. He then tied up the guards, pulled the emergency cord, jumped off the train and eluded capture for a year. To make sure that Gardner arrived at McNeil on his second trip, he was placed in the custody of two of the toughest and smartest U.S. marshals. As their train approached the same place on the night of June 11, 1921, Gardner escaped again in almost the same way. The marshals had searched him, but the revolver he used this time was his own and it had been taped to his body.

A unique, harmonious and little-known piece of music is Mozart's Krebsgang, or Crab Walk, which he composed about 1770. It is performed by two violinists who face each other and read their notes from the same sheet of music, which is lying on a small table between them. As each reads from left to right and top to bottom, one plays the piece right side up or forward while the other plays it upside down or backward.

In 1875, a scene in a New York courtroom so shocked and incensed everyone present that it promptly resulted in the formation of America's first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Until that time, no laws existed under which children could be rescued from parents who habitually beat them, although such legislation had long been needed in the slum areas of the city. Having investigated one pitiful case, a noted lawyer obtained a warrant and brought a six-year-old girl to court to show the judge why she should be taken away from her mother and father. Standing "Mary Ellen" on a table, the lawyer removed her blanket —and the spectators gasped. She was clad only in a rag, her hair was matted with blood, and her frail little body was filthy, alive with vermin and covered with livid bruises.

A collection of more than 600 stories from this column is now available in a book, Keep Up with the World (288 pp., $2), published by Grosset & Dunlap, New York.

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"Aren't husbands really more possessive than wives?"

ASKED ELSIE, THE BORDEN COW

"MORE POSSESSIVE!" exploded Elmer, the bull. "Haw! And *double haw!* Just let me dance twice of an evening with some other guy's wife, and see your eyes snap!"

"They're snapping with pleasure," giggled Elsie, "because you're having so much fun. Seriously, dear, why *do* you get so upset when I merely go to a meeting of Borden's dealers?"

"Because," boomed Elmer, "I'm old-fashioned enough to believe that *my* wife's place is in *my* home, taking care of *my* kids!"

"My, my, *my!*" laughed Elsie. "See what I mean?"

"No, I don't!" snapped Elmer.

"Then I'll try to be clearer," said Elsie. "Suppose I —the wife—were inviting some of our friends over. I'd ask them to come to *our* house to try *Borden's Instant* Coffee made by the wonderful new *Flavor-Peak* Process. It's richer, more flavorful than ever! Because the great new process—and it's Borden's alone—extracts *more* flavor from the *freshly* roasted coffee than ever before."

"WHEW!" whistled Elmer. "She's even getting possessive about Borden's Instant Coffee!"

"Oh, no!" protested Elsie. "I want to *share* Borden's Instant with the *millions* who love really good coffee, and like to fix it *quick*. Borden's is *all* coffee—nothing but. And there's no pot to wash, no grounds. For Borden's throws away the grounds. You get only the *essence* of fine coffee. So your Borden's Instant goes further... costs less per cup."

"Just one more word about Borden's, and *I'll* go so far, you'll have to use radar to find me!" threatened Elmer.

"You must never do that!" cried Elsie, in mock alarm. "If I didn't know where you were, I'd worry that you might not be getting enough *Borden's Milk* every day. It's such an awfully important part of your daily diet."

"Leave my diet out of this!" roared Elmer.

"Oh, I'm not talking about just *your* diet, dear," said Elsie. "Borden's Milk is good for everyone. It supplies *many* vital food elements. Proteins, vitamins—"

Borden's Hemo
Borden's SWEETENED CHOCOLATE FLAVORED MALTED MILK
Borden's ICE CREAM
Lady Borden HOT CREAM
Borden's EAGLE BRAND CONDENSED MILK MAGIC RECIPES
Borden's KLIM POWDERED WHOLE MILK
Borden's INSTANT COFFEE
Borden's INSTANT MIX HOT CHOCOLATE FLAVORED DRINKS
Borden's NONE SUCH Mince Meat
Borden's Cheese
LIEDERKRANZ CHEESE
Borden's EVAPORATED MILK
—if it's Borden's, it's got to be good!

"Go ahead, name them," sulked Elmer, "if you'd rather possess Borden's Milk than *me*."

"Surely," gasped Elsie, "you can't possibly be jealous of Borden's Milk! It's such a delicious drink! And it makes cooked dishes so much more nourishing! Milk gives you more nourishment for what you spend for it than any other food. *Penny for penny, your best food buy is milk!*"

"I'd think," frowned Elmer, "that you've talked enough Borden's, and could spare a few minutes for me!"

"But I have lots of time for *you*, dear!" said Elsie. "Just give me a second to say—*if it's Borden's, it's got to be good* . . . Now, let's talk about you, Elmer."

© The Borden Company

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When it's so easy to avoid!

SMOKE ALL YOU WANT! This new Listerine Tooth Paste, with Lusterfoam, attacks tobacco yellow and off-color breath.

Maybe you *haven't* got "Tobacco Mouth". Maybe your teeth sparkle and your breath is sweetness itself. But remember this: often enough the person who offends is the very person who is unaware of offending.

So why take chances when it's so easy to play it safe? Why risk lessening your attractiveness when it's such a cinch to be sure? If you smoke a lot, just take this one, simple precaution . . . start using the new Listerine Tooth Paste, especially before a date, or any other social engagement.

There's a reason: Listerine Tooth Paste is made with Lusterfoam—a wonderful new-type cleansing ingredient that literally *foams* cleaning and polishing agents over tooth surfaces. It removes yellow tobacco stain, while it's still fresh . . . whisks away odor-producing bacteria and tobacco debris.

Why not get a tube of the *improved* Listerine Tooth Paste, and see for yourself what a thorough job it does on tooth surfaces and in between the teeth! Just feel that Lusterfoam go to work! Use it regularly, and *know* they'll never say "Tobacco Mouth" about you! Lambert Pharmacal Co., St. Louis, Mo.

What about
TOOTH DECAY?

It's mainly up to you! If you will always brush your teeth right after eating, you will almost certainly help reduce decay in your teeth . . . no matter what dentifrice you use. We suggest you use Listerine Tooth Paste and

COMBAT DECAY THE *PLEASANT* WAY!

TOBACCO MOUTH
...give it the "brush-off" with

TASTE THAT WINTER-MINT FLAVOR!
LISTERINE TOOTH PASTE

"Feel that Lusterfoam work!"

Week's Mail

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

due to his ability and untiring effort in the management of problems far beyond the comprehension of the ordinary person in these United States.

I too was in the military government of Germany, from its lowest detachment to its highest echelon. In none of these did it ever seem we would be free of some Red interference.

B. W. PETERSON,
San Bernardino, Cal.

. . . Lenin and Stalin have declared repeatedly that there can never be peace between their system of slavery and ours of freedom. There are entirely too many people in this country who still refuse to believe the accuracy of those statements. It is in the printed works of both tyrants, and the Russians have an adage: *Chto napisano perom, nye sroobish toporom*—What is written with a pen cannot be erased with an ax.

Having spent many years in Russia, I appreciate beyond words the service you and General Howley are rendering with this exposé.

J. ANTHONY MARCUS,
New York City, N. Y.

He's No. 1 with "Big 6"

EDITOR: Lineman of the Year? by Bill Fay (Nov. 5th) is indeed a splendid tribute to the greatest football player in college ranks today. Leon Hart of Notre Dame is a real All-American—on or off the gridiron.

My sincere appreciation for such enjoyable reading.

"BIG 6" HENDERSON, Bowling Green, Ky.

Notre Dame's Hart—made Collier's and Henderson's All-America

Mail from Germany

EDITOR: Being stationed here in Berlin with the occupation army, I read Mr. D. Clark's article (The Germans Wait Only for a Leader, Oct. 1st) with great interest. Although I agree with him on the main points of the article, I wish to take exception to a few of the minor points he brought out.

His character Else's violent dislike for dandelion salad makes her an exceptional character, for some of the salads I have eaten in several German houses and cafés contained not only dandelions, but also other plants in varying combinations.

He also refers to the term that the Germans used and still use for the Americans, "Amis," as being a contemptuous German equivalent of our word "Kraut," which is definitely an insult. The German word for American is *Amerikaner,* which the Germans have shortened to Ami, or in the plural, to Amis, in much the same way as we have shortened the word German to Jerry.

CORPORAL DON MCGREEVEY,
Berlin, Germany

. . . I very much like your magazine, but find Delbert Clark's article rather misleading. He judges us by Else, his housekeeper, and other people badly adjusted whom you may find in Berlin as well as in Chattanooga. His "examples" simply must deceive those who solely depend on his information.

I do not credit us with political or diplomatic genius, because we are irrational thinkers, but Mr. Clark may be sure that we learned our lesson on Hitler, Stalin, Perón, etc. To me the so-called neo-Nazism means a very positive proof that fear has been overcome. Neo-Nazis have and will have no influence.

You Americans stand in all Germany's greatest respect, even less for ERP than for your individuals and way of life—whatever Else says about dandelion salad.

DR. ANDREAS MERCOTTJ,
Freiburg, Germany

Vitamin Controversy

EDITOR: I object to the statement attributed to Dr. Norbert J. Scully in the article, Strangest Garden in the World (Oct. 29th). First of all, ascorbic acid is not a source of vitamin C; ascorbic acid is a synonym for vitamin C.

Second, ascorbic acid can be made synthetically in the laboratory; for proof of this you can refer to the article by Hirst and associates (J. Chem. Soc., London, 1933, page 1,419) or to any standard textbook of biochemistry (such as Textbook of Biochemistry by B. Harrow, W. B. Saunders Co.).

I am sure that Dr. Scully did not actually make the quoted statement on page 90, but rather the author misquoted him.

N. P. GOLDSTEIN, M.D., Rochester, Minn.

Dr. Goldstein is correct on both counts. Dr. Scully points out, however, that "our objective is to randomly label the molecule with Carbon 14 atoms in order that the carbon atoms from each position in the molecule can then be traced. This type of labeling, for the present at least, can only be done with our techniques."

Collier's trusts that this clears up the matter for Dr. Goldstein and all other scientists in the audience.

One Term & Out, He Says

EDITOR: It would appear to me that in order to stop all this foolishness and excessive spending of the taxpayers' money both on government operations and on unnecessary gifts, we should elect congressmen and Senators, President and Vice-President, for one eight-year term and then retire them at half pay for the rest of their lives.

If they were elected in this manner, they would do the right thing (nearly everyone knows what is right) for the interests of all people in place of certain favored groups. These congressmen and Senators then would not be looking for votes, but would do what they could to run the government on a businesslike basis.

C. O. POLLOCK, Kansas City, Mo.

An Old Admirer

EDITOR: I am ninety-one years old and I am writing you to congratulate you on your cover pictures. They are grand.

Collier's is ahead of all magazines. I read all the time, take morning paper and enjoy all of it, regardless of my ninety-one years.

MRS. ELLA BUCK, Joplin, Mo.

Tolls & Trucks

EDITOR: Shouldn't you be ashamed to write the Shakedown? editorial (Nov. 5th)? The ultramodern highway of today will be obsolete in three years. Why? Because the truck manufacturers will increase their load limit, to overtax the most modern highway.

A very small toll properly administered would keep a highway in tiptop condition without bonding and impoverishing the property of the widows and orphans.

A. P. MORAN, President, Jackson County Board of Supervisors, Pascagoula, Miss.

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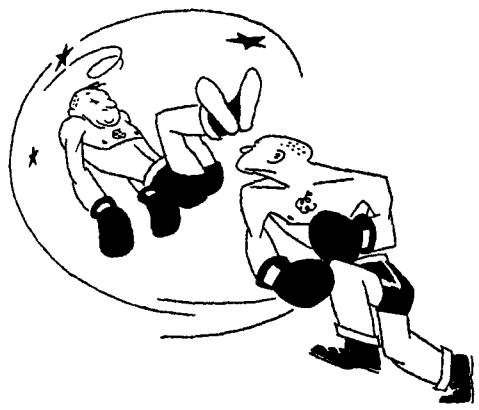
extra punch . . .



● Extra punch when you need it. **When spark plugs become sluggish or misfire under heavy loads, the cause is probably oxide coating on the insulators.**

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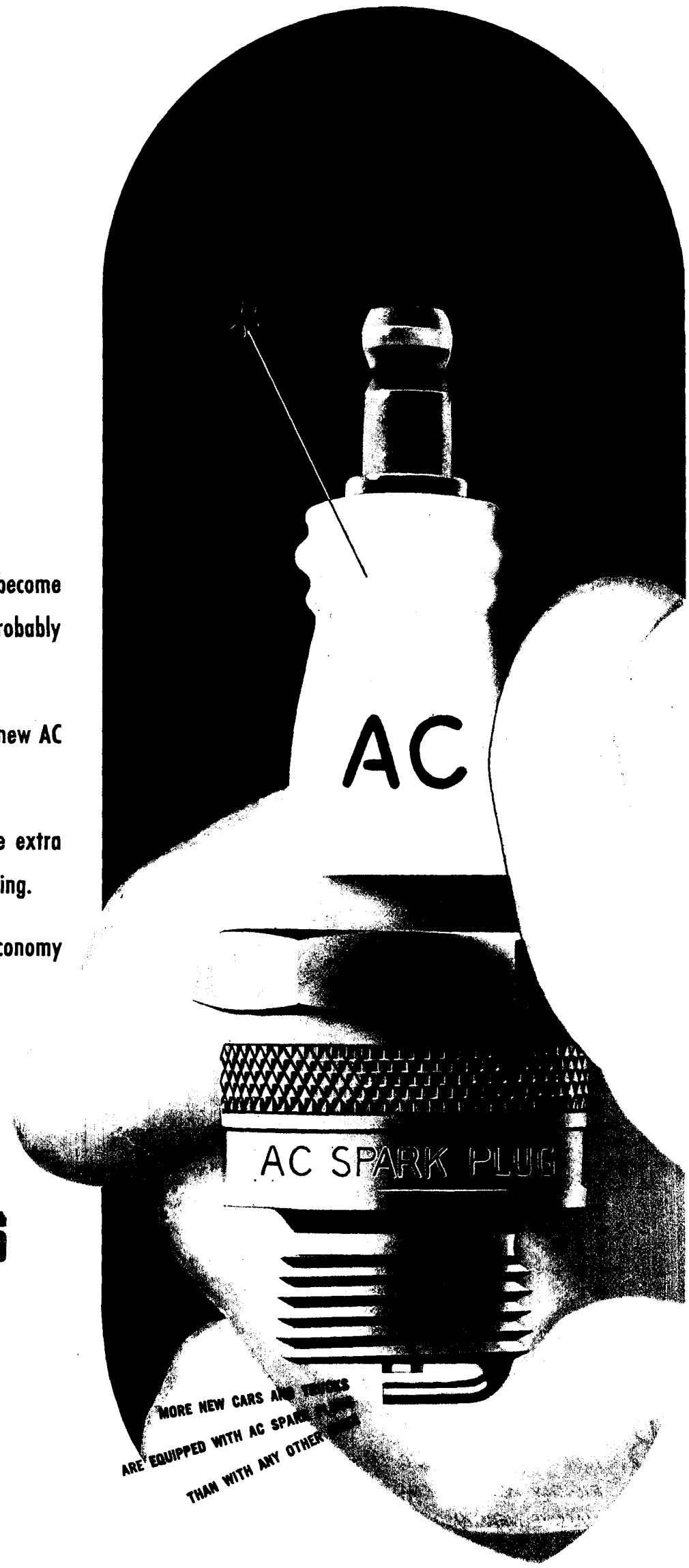
They give you the extra mileage that means real economy and they stay clean and efficient longer.



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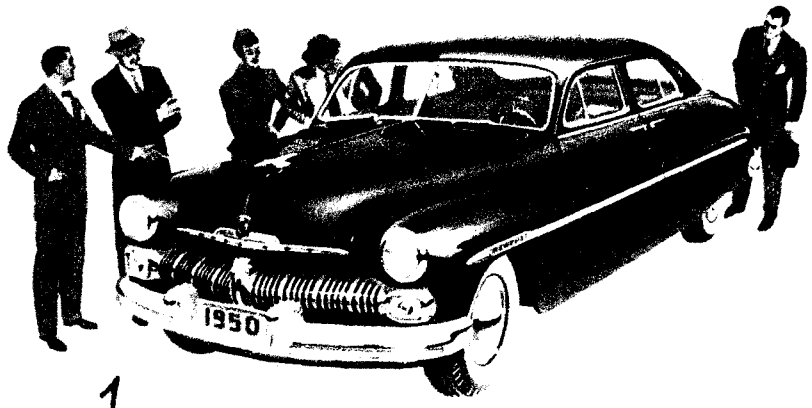
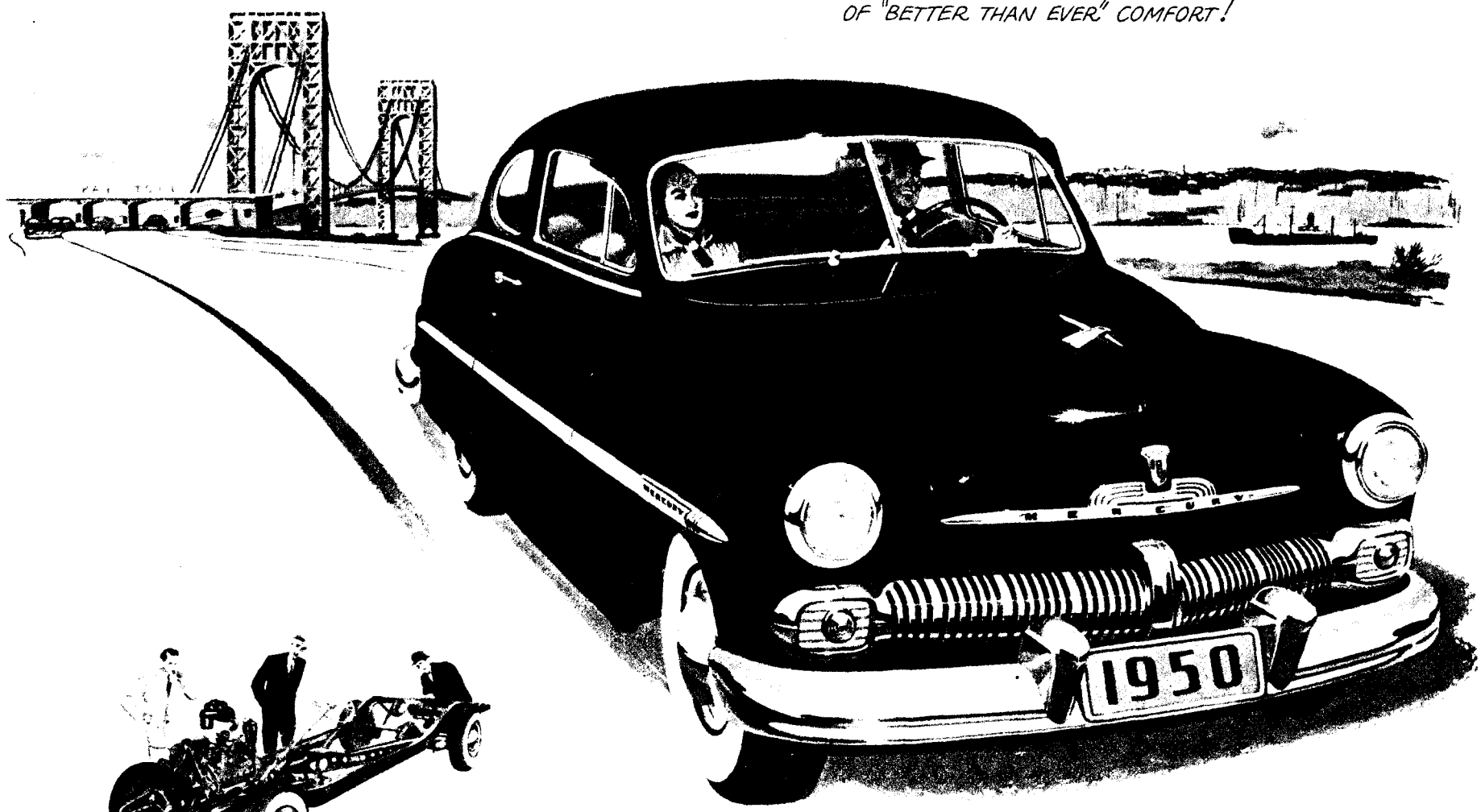
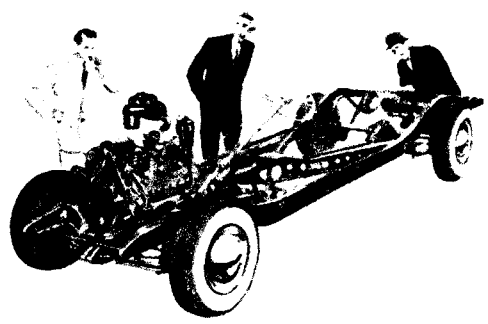
New 1950 MERCURY



1. LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THIS BIG, NEW 1950 MERCURY! IT'S "BETTER THAN EVER" IN ECONOMY AND ALL-ROUND PERFORMANCE, TOO!

2. LOOK AT THE ROOM IN THIS BROAD, FOAM RUBBER-CUSHIONED FRONT SEAT! ALMOST A FULL FIVE FEET OF "BETTER THAN EVER" COMFORT!





3. LOOK AT THE RUGGED LINES OF THIS RIGIDLY WELDED CHASSIS! THE BIG, MASSIVE NEW 1950 MERCURY IS "BETTER THAN EVER" IN EVERYTHING!

White side-wall tires and rear wheel shields optional at extra cost

LAST YEAR, Mercury was an outstanding buy. This year, it's a *better* buy than ever! For the new 1950 Mercury is *better than ever in everything!*

It's better in *styling* – with new advanced design! Better in *comfort*–with "Lounge-Rest" foam rubber-cushioned seating! Better in *economy* – with "Econ-O-Miser" carburetion. Better in *performance*–with "Hi-Power Compression." Better in all-around *value!*

And remember, everything's been *road-proven* too. No wonder Mercury popularity is now the highest in history! See your Mercury dealer–and see why it's *better than ever* to make *your* next car Mercury!

MERCURY DIVISION OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY

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Christmas Trees

The city had withdrawn into itself
And left at last the country to the country;
When between whirls of snow not come to lie
And whirls of foliage not yet laid, there drove
A stranger to our yard, who looked the city,
Yet did in country fashion in that there
He sat and waited till he drew us out
A-buttoning coats to ask him who he was.
He proved to be the city come again
To look for something it had left behind
And could not do without and keep its Christmas.
He asked if I would sell my Christmas trees;
My woods—the young fir balsams like a place
Where houses all are churches and have spires.
I hadn't thought of them as Christmas trees.
I doubt if I was tempted for a moment
To sell them off their feet to go in cars
And leave the slope behind the house all bare,
Where the sun shines now no warmer than the moon.
I'd hate to have them know it if I was.
Yet more I'd hate to hold my trees except
As others hold theirs or refuse for them,
Beyond the time of profitable growth,
The trial by market everything must come to.
I dallied so much with the thought of selling.
Then whether from mistaken courtesy
And fear of seeming short of speech, or whether
From hope of hearing good of what was mine,
I said, 'There aren't enough to be worth while.'
'I could soon tell how many they would cut,
You let me look them over.'

'You could look.
But don't expect I'm going to let you have them.'
Pasture they spring in, some in clumps too close
That lop each other of boughs, but not a few
Quite solitary and having equal boughs
All round and round. The latter he nodded 'Yes' to,
Or paused to say beneath some lovelier one,
With a buyer's moderation, 'That would do.'
I thought so too, but wasn't there to say so.
We climbed the pasture on the south, crossed over,
And came down on the north.

He said, 'A thousand.'

'A thousand Christmas trees!—at what apiece?'

He felt some need of softening that to me:
'A thousand trees would come to thirty dollars.'

Then I was certain I had never meant
To let him have them. Never show surprise!
But thirty dollars seemed so small beside
The extent of pasture I should strip, three cents
(For that was all they figured out apiece),
Three cents so small beside the dollar friends
I should be writing to within the hour
Would pay in cities for good trees like those,
Regular vestry-trees whole Sunday Schools
Could hang enough on to pick off enough.
A thousand Christmas trees I didn't know I had!
Worth three cents more to give away than sell,
As may be shown by a simple calculation.
Too bad I couldn't lay one in a letter.
I can't help wishing I could send you one,
In wishing you herewith a Merry Christmas.

FROM COMPLETE POEMS OF ROBERT FROST, 1949. COPYRIGHT, 1916, 1949, BY HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY, INC. COPYRIGHT, 1943, BY ROBERT FROST

It took America a long time to discover Robert Frost. The most native of poets, he had to wait until he was almost forty before his first book was published—and that book was published in England. When his second volume, North of Boston (also brought out on the other side of the Atlantic), made literary history, his own country hurried to make reparations. Today, nearing seventy-five, Frost is our most honored writer. Besides having a small stock pile of degrees and the Gold Medal from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, Frost is the only poet who has been awarded the Pulitzer prize four times. Nothing Frost has written is more typical of the man—his quizzical turn of speech and his quiet humor—than Christmas Trees. The old conflict of city versus country is given a new and deeper meaning in poetry of a full and forthright nature, a poetry fresh and fragrant as the young fir balsams which keep Christmas all year round. Frost calls this poem A Christmas Circular Letter, and it is no small thing to receive such a communication from the most gracious as well as the greatest of living poets.

—LOUIS UNTERMEYER

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLOTTE JOAN STERNBERG

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Jest 'Fore Christmas

By EUGENE FIELD

Father calls me William, sister calls me Will,
Mother calls me Willie, but the fellers call me Bill!
Mighty glad I ain't a girl—ruther be a boy,
Without them sashes, curls, an' things that's worn by Fauntleroy!
Love to chawnk green apples an' go swimmin' in the lake—
Hate to take the caster-ile they give for belly-ache!
'Most all the time, the whole year round, there ain't no flies on me,
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Got a yeller dog named Sport, sick him on the cat;
First thing she knows she doesn't know where she is at!
Got a clipper sled, an' when us kids goes out to slide,
'Long comes a grocery cart, an' we all hook a ride!
But sometimes when the grocery man is worrited an' cross,
He reaches at us with his whip, an' larrups up his hoss,
An' then I laff an' holler, "Oh, ye never teched *me!*"
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Gran'ma says she hopes that when I git to be a man
I'll be a missionarer like her oldest brother, Dan,
As was et up by the cannibuls that lived in Ceylon's Isle,
Where every prospeck pleases, an' only man is vile!
But gran'ma she has never been to see a Wild West show,
Nor read the Life of Daniel Boone, or else I guess she'd know
That Buff'lo Bill and cowboys is good enough for me!
Excep' jest 'fore Christmas, when I'm good as I kin be!

And then old Sport he hangs around, so solemn-like an' still,
His eyes they keep a-sayin': "What's the matter, little Bill?"
The old cat sneaks down off her perch an' wonders what's become
Of them two enemies of hern that used to make things hum!
But I am so perlite an' 'tend so earnestly to biz,
That mother says to father: "How improved our Willie is!"
But father, havin' been a boy hisself, suspicions me
When jest 'fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin be!

For Christmas, with its lots an' lots of candies, cakes an' toys,
Was made, they say, for proper kids an' not for naughty boys;
So wash yer face an' bresh yer hair, an' mind yer p's an' q's,
An' don't bust out yer pantaloons, an' don't wear out yer shoes;
Say "Yessum" to the ladies, an' "Yessur" to the men,
An' when they's company, don't pass yer plate for pie again;
But, thinking of the things yer'd like to see upon that tree,
Jest 'fore Christmas be as good as yer kin be!

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT J. LEE

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Christmas Every Day

By WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

THE little girl came into her papa's study, as she always did Saturday morning before breakfast, and asked for a story. He tried to beg off that morning, for he was very busy, but she would not let him. So he began:

"Well, once there was a little pig—"

She put her hand over his mouth and stopped him at the word. She said she had heard little-pig stories till she was perfectly sick of them.

"Well, what kind of story shall I tell, then?"

"About Christmas. It's getting to be the season. It's past Thanksgiving already."

"It seems to me," her papa argued, "that I've told as often about Christmas as I have about little pigs."

"No difference! Christmas is more interesting."

"Well!" Her papa roused himself from his writing by a great effort. "Well, then, I'll tell you about the little girl that wanted it Christmas every day in the year. How would you like that?"

"First-rate!" said the little girl; and she nestled into comfortable shape in his lap, ready for listening.

"Very well, then, this little pig—Oh, what are you pounding me for?"

"Because you said little pig instead of little girl."

"I should like to know what's the difference between a little pig and a little girl that wanted it Christmas every day!"

"Papa," said the little girl, warningly, "if you don't go on, I'll give it to you!" And at this her papa darted off like lightning, and began to tell the story as fast as he could:

Well, once there was a little girl who liked Christmas so much that she wanted it to be Christmas every day in the year, and as soon as Thanksgiving was over she began to send postal cards to the old Christmas Fairy to ask if she mightn't have it.

But the old Fairy never answered any of the postals; and after a while the little girl found out that the Fairy was pretty particular, and wouldn't notice anything but letters —not even correspondence cards in envelopes; but real letters on sheets of paper, and sealed outside with a monogram—or your initial, anyway.

So, then, she began to send her letters; and in about three weeks—or just the day before Christmas, it was—she got a letter from the Fairy saying she might have it Christmas every day for a year, and then they would see about having it longer.

The little girl was a good deal excited already, preparing for the old-fashioned, once-a-year Christmas that was coming the next day, and perhaps the Fairy's promise didn't make such an impression on her as it would have made at some other time. She just resolved to keep it to herself, and surprise everybody with it as it kept coming true; and then it slipped out of her mind altogether.

She had a splendid Christmas. She went to bed early, so as to let Santa Claus have a chance at the stockings, and in the morning she was up the first of anybody and went and felt them, and found hers all lumpy with packages of candy, and oranges and grapes, and pocketbooks and rubber balls, and all kinds of small presents, and her big brother's with nothing but the tongs in them, and *(Continued on page 75)*

FROM "UNCLE TOBY'S CHRISTMAS BOOK" COMPILED BY PAUL R. REYNOLDS, HARPER & BROS., 1936

ILLUSTRATED BY FRED BANBERY

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How Come Christmas?

By ROARK BRADFORD

SCENE: *Corner in rural Negro church by the stove. The stove is old, and the pipe is held approximately erect by guy wires, but a cheerful fire is evident through cracks in the stove, and the wood box is well filled. Six children sit on a bench which has been shifted to face the stove, and the Reverend stands between them and the stove. A hatrack on the wall supports sprigs of holly and one "plug" hat. A window is festooned with holly, long strips of red paper, and strings of popcorn. A small Christmas bell and a tiny American flag are the only "store-bought" decorations.*

REVEREND—Well, hyar we is, chilluns, and hyar hit is. Christmas. Now we all knows we's hyar 'cause hit's Christmas, don't we? But what I want to know is, who gonter tell me how come hit's Christmas?

WILLIE—'Cause old Sandy Claus come around about dis time er de year, clawin' all de good chilluns wid presents.

CHRISTINE—Dat ain't right, is hit, Revund? Hit's Christmas 'cause de Poor Little Jesus was bawned on Christmas, ain't hit, Revund?

REVEREND—Well, bofe er dem is mighty good answers. Old Sandy Claus do happen around about dis time er de year wid presents, and de Poor Little Jesus sho was bawned on Christmas Day. Now, de question is, did old Sandy Claus start clawin' chillun wid presents before de Poor Little Jesus got bawned, or did de Little Jesus git bawned before old Sandy Claus started gittin' around?

WILLIE—I bet old Sandy Claus was clawin' chilluns before de Poor Little Jesus started studdin' about gittin' bawned.

CHRISTINE—Naw, suh. De Little Jesus comed first, didn't he, Revund?

WILLIE—Old Sandy Claus is de oldest. I seed his pitchers and I seed Jesus' pitchers and old Sandy Claus is a heap de oldest. His whiskers mighty nigh tetch de ground.

DELIA—Dat ain't right. Old Methuselah is de oldest, ain't he, Revund? Cause de Bible say

Methuselah was de oldest man of his time. He lived nine hund'ed and sixty-nine. And he died and went to heaven in due time.

REVEREND—Methuselah was powerful old, all right.

WILLIE—He wa'n't no older den old Sandy Claus, I bet. Old Sandy Claus got a heap er whiskers.

CHRISTINE—But de Poor Little Jesus come first. He was hyar before old man Methuselah, wa'n't he, Revund?

REVEREND—He been hyar a powerful long time, all right.

WILLIE—So has old Sandy Claus. He got powerful long whiskers.

DELIA—Moses got a heap er whiskers too.

REVEREND—Yeah, Moses was a *(Continued on page 68)*

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The Little Match Girl

By HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

IT WAS late on a bitterly cold, snowy, New Year's Eve. A poor little girl was wandering in the dark cold streets; she was bareheaded and barefooted. She certainly had had shoes on when she left home, but they were not much good, for they were so huge. They had last been worn by her mother, and they fell off the poor little girl's feet when she was running across the street to avoid two carriages that were rolling rapidly by. One of the shoes could not be found at all; and the other was picked up by a boy, who ran off with it, saying that it would do for a cradle when he had children of his own.

So the poor little girl had to go on with her little bare feet, which were blue with the cold. She carried a quantity of matches in her old apron, and held a packet of them in her hand. Nobody had bought any from her during all the long day; nobody had even given her a copper.

The poor little creature was hungry and perishing with cold, and she looked the picture of misery. The snowflakes fell upon her long yellow hair, which curled so prettily round her face, but she paid no attention to that. Lights were shining from every window, and there was a most delicious odor of roast goose in the streets, for it was New Year's Eve—she could not forget that. She found a protected place where one house projected a little beyond the next one, and here she crouched, drawing up her feet under her, but she was colder than ever.

She did not dare to go home, for she had not sold any matches and had not earned a single penny. Her father would beat her; besides, it was almost as cold at home as it was here. They lived in a house where the wind whistled through every crack, although they tried to stuff up the biggest ones with rags and straw. Her tiny hands were almost paralyzed with cold. Oh, if she could only find some way to warm them! Dared she pull one match out of the bundle and strike it on the wall to warm her fingers? She pulled one out. "Ritsch!" How it spluttered, how it blazed! It burned with a bright clear flame, just like a little candle when she held her hand round it.

It was a very curious candle, too. The little girl fancied that she was sitting in front of a big stove with polished brass feet and handles. There was a splendid fire blazing in it and warming her so beautifully, but—what happened? Just as she was stretching out her feet to warm them, the blaze went out, the stove vanished, and she was left sitting with the end of the burnt-out match in her hand.

She struck a new one, it burned, it blazed up, and where the light fell upon the wall against which she lay, it became transparent like gauze, and she could see right through it into the room inside. There was a table spread with a snowy cloth and pretty china; a roast goose stuffed with apples and prunes was steaming on it. And what was even better, the goose hopped from the dish with the carving knife and fork sticking in its back, and it waddled across the floor. It came right up to the poor child, and then—the match went out and there was nothing to be seen but the thick black wall.

She lighted another match. This time she was sitting under a lovely Christmas tree. It was much bigger and more beautifully decorated than the one she had seen when she had peeped through the glass doors at the rich merchant's house this Christmas Day. Thousands of lighted candles gleamed upon its branches, and colored pictures such as she had seen in the shop windows looked down upon her.

The little girl stretched out both her hands toward them—then out went the match. All the Christmas candles rose higher and higher, till she saw that they were only the twinkling stars. One of them fell and made a bright streak of light across the sky. Someone is dying, thought the little girl; for her old grandmother, the only person who had ever been kind to her, used to say, "When a star falls a soul is going up to God."

Now she struck another match against the wall, and this time it was her grandmother who appeared in the circle of flame. She saw her quite clearly and distinctly, looking so gentle and happy.

"Grandmother!" cried the little creature. "Oh, do take me with you! I know you will vanish when the match goes out; you will vanish like the warm stove, the delicious goose, and the beautiful Christmas tree!"

She hastily struck a whole bundle of matches, because she did so want to keep her grandmother with her. The light of the matches made it as bright as day. Grandmother had never before looked so big or so beautiful. She lifted the little girl up in her arms, and they soared in a halo of light and joy, far, far above the earth, where there was no more cold, no hunger, no pain, for they were with God.

ILLUSTRATED BY CONCETTA CACCIOLA

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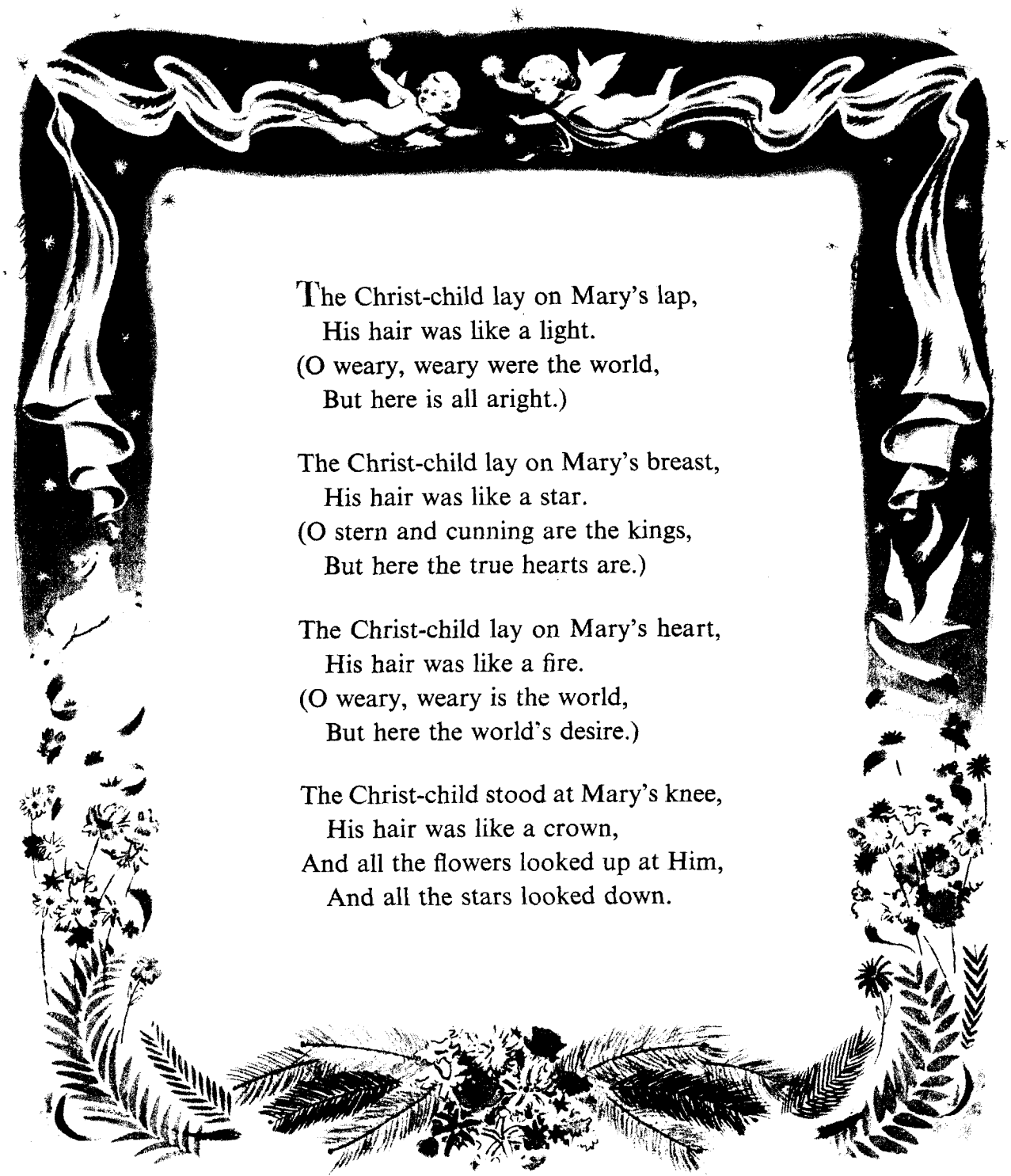
The Christ-Child

By G. K. CHESTERTON



The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,
His hair was like a light.
(O weary, weary were the world,
But here is all aright.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast,
His hair was like a star.
(O stern and cunning are the kings,
But here the true hearts are.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart,
His hair was like a fire.
(O weary, weary is the world,
But here the world's desire.)

The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown,
And all the flowers looked up at Him,
And all the stars looked down.

FROM THE VOLUME "THE WILD KNIGHT AND OTHER POEMS," BY G. K. CHESTERTON, PUBLISHED BY E. P. DUTTON & CO., INC.

DECORATION BY FRANK LACANO

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The Pasteboard Star

By MARGARET CARPENTER

GREGORY curled himself in as small a space as possible and pulled the bedclothes over his head. His breath made a safe, warm little cave under the covers, which shut out the larger darkness around him, and made him forget that he was afraid. It was the way he had gone to sleep ever since Aunt Martha had taken him out of the nursery and given him a room to himself, because he was big enough to begin to grow up. The cave made it all right —made it so that he didn't mind not being able to hear Christopher talking to himself, or Alan singing tunes under his breath that were not tunes at all.

At first he made believe he was a lion or a bear going to sleep out of doors, but soon he began telling himself stories. They were not word stories, like the ones in books, but picture stories—pictures of things happening, and sometimes, when they were very good, not even pictures, but the things themselves. Always, when they were done, he felt warm and tingly and happy, and it seemed as if there were a light in the cave, and as if his mother were there, nodding and smiling at him because he had done something brave and beautiful, and then he was asleep.

Tonight it was different. It was Christmas Eve, but that was not what made the difference. He had something very important to do—something that he simply had to do before he could go to sleep. It had begun at supper. He still had supper with Christopher and Alan, because his father almost never came home for dinner, almost never came home before he went to bed, in fact. It was because his father was a doctor, and sick people couldn't wait, but children could. Tonight they had hoped perhaps he might get home, and they had been waiting, and Aunt Martha was cross because she had had too much to do. He didn't really mind much about Aunt Martha. She was like the weather. You had to take her as she was and just not listen. Maybe she'd be better tomorrow.

Christopher had started it. Aunt Martha had gone out of the room on business of her own, and they were alone. He had pushed his chair back, because the nursery table hurt his knees. Christopher was spilling milk down his sweater as usual, and Alan was making islands out of his oatmeal.

"Listen, Greg, do you really remember her?" It was funny how Christopher seemed to know sometimes just what people were thinking about.

"Sure I do," he had answered.

"Tell me something."

"Well, she wore a white dress, and she carried a baby."

"You?"

"No, I guess it was Alan."

"I made *two* islands," said Alan, who never paid any attention to anything except what he himself was doing.

"It couldn't have been Alan. I heard Aunt Martha telling Sadie about how she died before Alan was born."

"Silly, how could she? Isn't she Alan's mother too?"

"Well, anyway she never saw Alan, because she died in a horsepital and never came home."

"Not horsepital—hospital."

"Maybe it was me she carried." *(Continued on page* 38)

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A Miserable, Merry Christmas

By LINCOLN STEFFENS

WHAT interested me in our new neighborhood was not the school, nor the room I was to have in the house all to myself, but the stable which was built back of the house. My father let me direct the making of a stall, a little smaller than the other stalls, for my pony, and I prayed and hoped and my sister Lou believed that that meant that I would get the pony, perhaps for Christmas. I pointed out to her that there were three other stalls and no horses at all. This I said in order that she should answer it. She could not.

My father, sounded, said that someday we might have horses and a cow; meanwhile a stable added to the value of a house. "Someday" is a pain to a boy who lives in and knows only "now." My good little sisters, to comfort me, remarked that Christmas was coming and grownups were always talking about it, asking you what you wanted and then giving you what they wanted you to have. Though everybody knew what I wanted, I told them all again. My mother knew that I told God, too, every night. I wanted a pony, and to make sure that they understood I declared that I wanted nothing else.

"Nothing but a pony?" my father asked.

"Nothing," I said.

"Not even a pair of high boots?"

That was hard. I did want boots, but I stuck to the pony. "No, not even boots."

"Nor candy? There ought to be something to fill your stocking with, and Santa Claus can't put a pony into a stocking."

That was true, and he couldn't lead a pony down the chimney, either. But no, "All I want is a pony," I said. "If I can't have a pony, give me nothing, nothing."

Now I had been looking myself for the pony I wanted, going to sales stables, inquiring of horsemen, and I had seen several that would do. My father let me "try" them. I tried so many ponies that I was learning fast to sit a horse. I chose several, but my father always found some fault with them.

I was in despair. When Christmas was at hand I had given up all hope of a pony, and on Christmas Eve I hung up my stocking along with my sisters'. They were so happy that I caught some of their merriment. I speculated on what I'd get; I hung up the biggest stocking I had, and we all went reluctantly to bed to wait till morning. Not to sleep; not right away. We were told that we must not only sleep promptly, we must not wake up till seven thirty the next morning—or if we did, we must not go to the fireplace for our Christmas. Impossible.

We did sleep that night, but we woke up at 6 A.M. We lay in our beds and debated through the open doors whether to obey till, say, half past six. Then we bolted. I don't know who started it, but there was a rush. We all disobeyed; we raced to disobey and get first to the fireplace in the front room downstairs. And there they were, the gifts, all sorts of wonderful things, mixed-up piles of presents; only, as I disentangled the mess, I saw that my stocking was empty; it hung limp; not a thing in it; and under and around it—nothing.

My sisters had knelt down, each by her pile of gifts; they were squealing with delight, till they looked up and saw me standing there in my nightgown with nothing. They left their piles to come to me and look with me at my empty place. Nothing. They felt my stocking: nothing.

I don't remember whether I cried at that moment, but my sisters did. They ran with me back to my bed, and there we all cried till I became indignant. That helped some. I got up, dressed, and driving my sisters away, I went alone out into the yard, down to the stable, and there, all (*Continued on page* 77)

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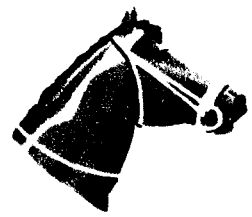
ILLUSTRATED BY  BERN HILL

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How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar

IT had been raining in the valley of the Sacramento. The North Fork had overflowed its banks, and Rattlesnake Creek was impassable. The few boulders that had marked the summer ford at Simpson's Crossing were obliterated by a vast sheet of water stretching to the foothills. The up stage was stopped at Grangers; the last mail had been abandoned in the tules, the rider swimming for his life.

Nor was the weather any better in the foothills. The mud lay deep on the mountain road; the way to Simpson's Bar was indicated by broken-down teams and hard swearing. And farther on, cut off and inaccessible, rained upon and bedraggled, smitten by high winds and threatened by high water, Simpson's Bar, on the eve of Christmas Day, 1862, clung like a swallow's nest to the rocky entablature and splintered capitals of Table Mountain, and shook in the blast.

As night shut down on the settlement, a few lights gleamed through the mist from the windows of cabins on either side of the highway. Happily most of the population were gathered at Thompson's store, clustered around a red-hot stove, at which they silently spat in some accepted sense of social communion that perhaps rendered conversation unnecessary.

Even the sudden splashing of hoofs before the door did not arouse them. Dick Bullen alone paused in the act of scraping out his pipe, and lifted his head, but no other one of the group indicated any interest in, or recognition of, the man who entered.

It was a figure familiar enough to the company, and known in Simpson's Bar as "the Old Man." A man of perhaps fifty years; grizzled and scant of hair, but still fresh and youthful of complexion. A face full of ready, but not very powerful sympathy, with a chameleonlike aptitude for taking on the shade and color of contiguous moods and feelings. He had evidently just left some hilarious companions, and did not at first notice the gravity of the group, but clapped the shoulder of the nearest man jocularly, and threw himself into a vacant chair.

"Jest heard the best thing out, boys! Ye know Smiley, over yar—Jim Smiley—funniest man in the bar? Well, Jim was jest telling the richest yarn about—"

"Smiley's a ——— fool," interrupted a gloomy voice.

"A particular ——— skunk," added another in sepulchral accents.

A silence followed these positive statements. The Old Man glanced quickly around the group. Then his face slowly changed. "That's so," he said, reflectively, after a pause, "certingly a sort of a skunk and suthin' of a fool. In course." He was silent for a moment as in painful contemplation of the unsavoriness and folly of the unpopular Smiley. "Dismal weather, ain't it?" he added, now fully embarked on the current of prevailing sentiment. "Mighty rough papers on the boys, and no show for money this season. And tomorrow's Christmas."

There was a movement among the (*Continued on page* 63)

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A Rich Glow at Christmas

By CHARLES DICKENS

WHEN they were all tired of blind-man's buff, there was a great game at snap-dragon, and when fingers enough were burned with that, and all the raisins were gone, they sat down by the huge fire of blazing logs to a substantial supper, and a mighty bowl of was-sail, something smaller than an ordinary wash-house copper, in which the hot apples were hissing and bubbling with a rich look, and a jolly sound, that were perfectly irresistible.

"This," said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him, "this is, indeed, comfort."

"Our invariable custom," replied Mr. Wardle. "Everybody sits down with us on Christmas eve, as you see them now—servants and all; and here we wait, until the clock strikes twelve, to usher Christmas in, and beguile the time with forfeits and old stories. Trundle, my boy, rake up the fire."

Up flew the bright sparks in myriads as the logs were stirred. The deep red blaze sent forth a rich glow, that penetrated into the furthest corner of the room, and cast its cheerful tint on every face.

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'Democracy' in the Deep Delta

Concluding [illegible] OF THE DIXIECRATS

By LESTER VELIE

Boss Perez, who once saved Huey Long from impeachment, runs things in the deep delta. A new national figure, he is No. 1 Dixiecrat and champion of the states in the tidelands oil fight

WIDE WORLD
Leander H. Perez

FOLKS down-river from New Orleans know that the undisputed political overlord of the deep delta country is Leander H. Perez. A master of "Louisiana politics," Perez knows every trick of the trade: how to make it tough for your opponents to get on the ballot, how to run friendly caucuses, how to win a 97 per cent majority for your candidate.

To get on the ballot when you're not Perez-picked you must be on guard against the minutest technicality or wage a long fight through the Louisiana courts—against the state's most resourceful lawyer.

Adolph E. "Jake" Woolverton, a restaurant man, learned this when he tried to get on the ballot in 1947 to run for the state legislature against Perez' man.

First, Jake asked the local Democratic executive committee to let him have qualification (candidates') forms to fill out. Some forms came in the mail. Jake didn't know where they came from, because the envelope was unmarked. And he never found out. But Jake's lawyer took one look at the forms and said, "Don't touch."

"They're phonies," said the lawyer. "Fill them out, and you're a dead duck. You'll be disqualified for giving inadequate information."

Jake's lawyer was Sam "Monk" Zelden, who once starred at halfback for Loyola University of the South (New Orleans). Ex-halfback Monk called for an end play around Perez' parish Democratic executive committee. He went directly to the Secretary of State to get authentic candidates' forms.

But when these forms were filled out and went up to the Democratic executive committee for checking, lawyer Monk Zelden and candidate Jake Woolverton were thrown for a loss.

"We proceed according to the law, and we see that whoever qualifies does so properly and according to the law," Perez says.

And so, with legal punctilio, Perez and his committee disqualified Jake on a technicality and 24 other "oppositionists" as well.

But the New Orleans Times-Picayune held its nose.

" 'Plaquemines smell' again," the paper observed wryly.

The technicality on which Jake and other Perez foes were barred was that they had failed to post the proper qualifying fee.

"I couldn't find out what it was," Jake complained through his lawyer. None of the Perez candidates had that trouble.

To get on the ballot, Jake's lawyer had to buck his way through the district court—with lawyer Perez resisting stoutly. When ex-halfback Zelden broke through in the lower court, Perez took up a one-yard stand in the state Supreme Court. But finally Perez had to give way. The decision came down: Jake Woolverton could run for the state legislature. (Another Perez opponent, however, was ruled off the ballot.)

Candidate Woolverton's fight to get on the ballot was old stuff in Perez' bailiwick. Court records are sprinkled with similar cases.

Technicalities which can be serious enough to throw a citizen off the ballot can sometimes disappear as if by magic—when Perez is willing.

"Once we threw out 12 of Jimmy Noe's (James A. Noe ran for governor in 1940) local candidates," Perez related to this writer. "As our committee ruled their qualifications were not in order, Noe's lawyer (he was a decent young chap) said, 'Can't you let us have a couple of them?' "

All technical difficulties for "a couple of them" melted.

"I said I had no objection," Perez related amiably.

Of candidates' troubles in Plaquemines the Times-Picayune said (in 1947):

"Political dictatorship in Plaquemines has stained the parish and state records with far too many smelly incidents and unsavory chapters. . . . The political annals and court records of the parish are so smeared with performances like these (disqualification of candidates) that 'Plaquemines politics' has become a byword the state over."

Unruffled, last year Perez achieved the ultimate in rousting candidates from ballots. He engineered the Dixiecrat move to keep President Truman off the ballot in Louisiana. In Democratic Louisiana there was no way for Democrats to vote for Democratic candidate Truman (except by complicated write-in) until Governor Earl Long asked the state legislature to solve the problem. President Truman went on the ballot, but not under the Democratic emblem. Triumphantly, Perez cast Louisiana's ten electoral votes for Dixiecrat candidate Strom Thurmond.

Perez is district attorney and political boss of two Louisiana delta parishes. From this relatively modest home base he has achieved what is reputedly one of the big fortunes in the South and is emerging as a significant national figure.

A brilliant lawyer, he leads a resourceful fight for state control of the oil riches in the tidelands off the states' shores. For years a Louisiana kingmaker (he is credited with masterminding Earl Long into the governor's mansion), Perez has projected himself on the national political stage too. He is the national leader and voice of the States' Rights Dixiecrats, a movement of extreme right-wing Southerners. In this role, Perez is the sonorous and scrappy champion of "constitutional government and local self-rule."

"We (the Dixiecrats) are awakening the people of every state to the menace to their right of self-government by the encroachment of the national government," says Perez.

"Local self-rule"—deep delta style—can be viewed close up on Perez' own home grounds: Plaquemines and Saint Bernard Parishes.

Perez described proudly how candidates for office are designated in his parish.

"Let me tell you about the real democracy we have here," he said.

He related that as head of the parish administration he issues a call for a parish-wide caucus.

"We write to about 200 people in the parish to come and bring their friends, and we publish a notice in the paper," said Perez. "Sometimes about 800 people come. Then we break them up into smaller meetings, and ward by ward they designate the candidates for office.

"Can you find anything more democratic?" asked Perez. "That word 'democratic' has been so much abused."

Here, critics agree with Perez.

They charge that only friends of "the parish administration" get the written invitations to the caucus. Opponents, uninvited, stay away. The caucus, presided over by Perez, is a model of harmonious agreement.

Has the caucus ever backed an anti-Perez maverick?

"They (the folks at the caucus) know who's knocking the parish administration," Perez said.

Perez revealed the unanimity of feeling that prevails in his area.

"There aren't even half a dozen (in the parish) who knock the administration," he said. "We could easily have them with us if we gave them political favors."

The extraordinary political harmony under Perez is reflected in the election returns.

The Perez-backed candidate for governor in 1936, Richard W. Leche, who later went to prison for using the mails to defraud, got over 97 per cent of the votes in Plaquemines. In a third of the precincts, the anti-Perez-Leche candidate polled not even one vote. *(Continued on page 42)*

INTERNATIONAL

Louisiana's Governor Earl Long, elected with Perez' support, rehearses for trip through the West

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"I couldn't have been out for very long," Doris said, "because when I came to, I was lying on the floor and blood was running into my eyes. I dragged myself to a telephone—"

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Diagnosis Deferred

By LAWRENCE G. BLOCHMAN

For a time, Dr. Dan Coffee didn't even suspect that a crime had been committed. It was convenient to think the bride's mother had died of natural causes

UNTIL she met Emory Jamison, Martha French had never been regarded as a sinister person, and it seemed inconceivable that a simple matter of her falling in love could have started such a train of evil events. Not that falling in love had been particularly simple. At least two dozen young men had loved Martha to the point of frenzy without evoking any reaction whatever on her part. Even her feelings for Dr. Orville Lang—whom she had more or less agreed to marry sometime in the vague future—were generally believed to consist of one part love to four parts cousinly affection.

But when she fell in love with Emory Jamison, the violence of the crash frightened Martha. The beginning was unexceptional—quite like ten thousand other hospital romances. Emory had slipped on the ice in front of the Northbank Produce Exchange. He had been scooped up and carted off to Pasteur Hospital for X rays, observation and general repairs. Martha, of course, had been his nurse.

Martha was the smallest nurse at Pasteur. She was so tiny that her colleagues wondered how she could manage a man as big as Emory Jamison. But she did. Her small white hands were quite competent. She was, in all ways, as competent as she was decorative; and she was decorative to a very high degree. Martha had red hair. She had a nice inquisitive nose, and a quick, broad, warm smile.

It took Martha and Emory only twenty-four hours to realize that they were in love. At first they thought they would wait until spring before getting married. Then, in a flurry of half-facetious panic when Emory smashed a mirror while experimenting with a crutch, Martha decided they would wait only until Emory's arm was out of a sling and the elastic bandage off his knee.

It was to be a big church wedding with all the trimmings money could by—and Emory's money could buy plenty. He had inherited some of the richest farm land in the country, and one of the handsomest collections of gilt-edged securities in Northbank County. And instead of converting his inheritance into polo ponies and bracelets for blondes, Emory had plowed it back into the soil until he was the largest single supplier of produce for Northbank's famed food canneries.

Northbank's society editors were delighted. So was the staff of Pasteur Hospital, from Old Chris, the janitor who grew strange flora in a corner of the hospital furnace room and promised rare blooms for the bride's bouquet, to Dr. Orville Lang, the bride's jilted cousin. Dr. Lang even offered to be best man, just to show he was a good loser. In a way, it was better for Dr. Lang that he had lost. His internship had been interrupted by a hitch in the Navy, and he had several years of residence at Pasteur to look forward to before he could go into practice and support a wife.

"After all, we were never really engaged," Dr. Lang said, explaining his cousin's lightning change of heart, "except in the mind of Martha's mother."

Martha's mother, Mrs. Isabel French, was flying from Honolulu for the wedding; but her plane was grounded in Chicago by a storm, and she came on by train. The train ran into a blizzard between Chicago and Northbank and was stalled in the deepest snowdrifts in twenty years. For thirty-six hours Mrs. French and her fellow passengers shivered in unheated cars while icy winds covered the train with snow. The sudden change from the perpetual summer of the tropics to the midwinter rigors of the American Midwest was a little too brutal for the bride's mother. An ambulance was waiting at the station when the train finally reached Northbank. And when Mrs. French was admitted to Pasteur Hospital, she was delirious and had a temperature of 105.

Martha French maintained a twenty-hour-a-day tour of duty at her mother's bedside. Dr. Lang kept a constant vigil between the relays of specialists. Old Chris brought camellias from his furnace-room hothouse. But Mrs. French died forty-eight hours before the wedding was to have taken place.

Martha, who had not seen her mother in nearly ten years, was grief-stricken. Emory was sorrowful and bewildered. And the wedding, of course, was called off.

Young Dr. Lang told Martha that while he was stunned by his aunt's death, he was also puzzled. The advent of antibiotics, capsule typing, and specific serums had reduced the pneumonia mortality rate amazingly in two decades. So, being a scientific-minded young intern, Dr. Lang persuaded Martha to authorize an autopsy.

THAT is why, three days after the funeral, the story of the French-Jamison nuptials moved from the society pages to the laboratory of Dr. Daniel Webster Coffee, pathologist for Pasteur Hospital.

Dr. Coffee, who had just finished examining the day's surgicals, snapped a switch, and the reflecting mirror of his microscope went dark. He looked up to stare incredulously into the brown moonface of Dr. Motilal Mookerji, resident in pathology. Dr. Mookerji, India's gift to Northbank, was a biochemist and bacteriologist extraordinary, as well as catch-as-catch-can champion in many tough bouts with the American language.

"But that's preposterous!" Dan Coffee exclaimed. "It's sheer nonsense. Who on earth would want to steal the microscopic sections of a post-mortem?"

"Perhaps malefactor of great stealth, wishing to prevent completion of post-mortem diagnosis," said the little Hindu, wagging his big head from side to side until the folds of his pink turban trembled. "Homicidal murderer, perhaps."

"Nonsense!" Dr. Coffee repeated. "The slides probably got mixed up with yesterday's surgicals, that's all. What was the patient's name?"

"Mrs. Isabel French," Dr. Mookerji replied.

"And who performed the autopsy?"

"Had sorrowful duty of performing autopsy with own hands," the Hindu said. "Quite sad case, Doctor Sahib. Lady was arriving in Northbank for nuptial ceremonies of daughter, who is beauteous nurse with red hairs."

"What were your gross findings, Doctor?"

"Double lobar pneumonia complicated by subacute endocarditis," the Hindu said. "However, beg to quote eminent pathologist Dr. Coffee, to wit: 'No autopsy complete until microscope renders verdict.' Therefore am reluctant to abandon homicide theory in view of apparent larceny."

"Maybe you're right, Doctor," Dan Coffee said. "Doris!"

DORIS HUDSON, the slim, blue-eyed technician, slid off a high laboratory stool; she crossed the laboratory with the graceful, stately strides of a mannequin and set four trays of glass slides before the pathologist.

"Look for yourself, Doctor," she said. "They're simply not there."

Dr. Coffee riffled through the scores of tiny glass oblongs flecked with color. He examined the case numbers on the slides.

"I've been through everything three times," said Doris Hudson. "The French slides have disappeared completely."

Dr. Coffee frowned. Specimens just didn't disappear from his laboratory. Every bit of tissue was numbered and labeled from the time it was first popped into formalin until the section was finally diagnosed under his microscope.

"Stop looking then, Doris," he said. "Just get out the paraffin blocks and cut new sections. I'll read the slides tomorrow. I'm going home now while it's still daylight, so I can finish digging out my driveway."

Dan Coffee worked up an appetite worthy of the veal chops en casserole which were simmering aromatically while he cleared away the last of the snow blocking his garage. He was gnawing appreciatively on a bone when the telephone rang. It was Dr. Mookerji.

"Greatly regret causing minor disturbances," the Hindu said. "Am perhaps intruding self into delicious repast."

(Continued on page 60)

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A Matter of PRINCIPLE

By JOHN D. WEAVER

The family didn't ask for much, but they got something very like a miracle the day Flagg Purdy got the spirit of Christmas

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THE older Purdy children, sprawled on the plank floor around the stove, worked at their school lessons by the muddy light of a coal-oil lamp. Their father's log house was the only one on the eight-mile stretch of Virginia hill road between Royalton and Cassville which had no electricity. Flagg Purdy had disagreed with the light company on a matter of principle.

"Anyway," Flagg always said, "'lectric lights strain the eyes."

The Purdys had no telephone either. Flagg differed politically with Mr. Devers. Mr. Devers was district manager of the telephone company.

"What's the capital of West Virginia?" one of the girls asked.

"I've never recognized West Virginia," Flagg said. He sat hunched over the old church organ acquired from the Pentecostal preacher in return for some roof work. He always played the organ while the children did their lessons. Music, he claimed, helped make the learning stick.

The Purdy girl, the summer one between Nellie Mae and Eleanor, frowned into her Redbird table. "But the book says—"

"There's only one Virginia," her father said, "and the capital is Richmond."

The girl drew a line through West Virginia.

"Could I put some more kindling in the stove?" Franklin Roosevelt asked.

"No. Stove heat thins the blood."

Flagg, who was wearing a heavy wool sweater under his blue denim jacket, turned the pages of his organ music book until he found Just Before the Battle, Mother. He began to hum. The December storm wind whistled through the paper strips pasted across the cracks in the small window panes. The snow filtered in, melted, and dripped like tears down the inside of the glass.

"How do you spell myrrh?" Nellie Mae asked.

"No such word."

"It's in the Christmas play. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

"No such word," Flagg repeated, "and if there is, I don't want you crowding your head with it. Tomorrow you tell Miss Keyes what I said."

"Miss Keyes quit."

Flagg whirled around angrily, the organ choking off with a gasping swosh. "Why?"

"She said same as the last one. Too many Purdys."

Flagg pushed up from the organ bench, his heavy work shoes scattering the children like chickens. He stood in front of the wood stove, his hands behind him. What little warmth was left in the stove went up the back of his blue denim jacket.

"Somep'n must of driv her to do it," he said.

The children looked down in fear, two of the smaller girls giggling nervously. Nellie Mae, the sassy one, finally spoke up. "She was taking the ruler to Franklin Roosevelt and Edgar flung a blackboard 'raser at her."

"I no such a thing!" Edgar roared.

"Did, too!" the girls chanted, all supporting Nellie Mae.

Edgar backed sullenly away from the stove. "It slipped out'n my hand."

Flagg turned to Franklin Roosevelt. That was the one with the fishhook scar on his left cheek. "How come her to take the ruler to you?"

Franklin Roosevelt shrugged, and the room was hushed except for the sounds of the storm.

"They was practicing the Christmas play," Lou Ellen said, "and Franklin Roosevelt got one of the Wise Men bit by a turtle."

"It was only Dink Kibler," Franklin Roosevelt said.

"Dink's the Wise Man with frankincense," Lou Ellen said, "and today when they got to the place where the Three Wise Men bring their presents to the stable, Dink opened the box and the turtle bit him."

Flagg nodded. He always listened with respect to Lou Ellen, the oldest girl, who took care of the smaller children and helped in the kitchen and the garden. She was more dependable than Sara Sue, who used to be the oldest girl. Sara Sue had run off and got married, a treacherous desertion which still upset Flagg every time he thought about it.

"I don't think Franklin really meant to hurt him," Lou Ellen said.

Flagg chewed his lower lip, weighing the matter judiciously. In a case such as this he always liked to get directly at the principle involved.

"Tomorrow," he said, "when I get the time for it, I'll take my belt to Edgar and Franklin Roosevelt, but Miss Keyes should of stuck by her job, no matter what."

Lou Ellen picked the three-year-old up from the floor and cradled the drowsy child in her arms. "The 'raser hit her right hard."

"Even so," Flagg said, "a principle was at stake."

ADA PURDY, Flagg's wife, came clumping into the room, a thin, sad-eyed woman whose shoes, discarded by her sister-in-law, were too large for her. They slapped.

"Miss Keyes quit," Flagg said. "That makes three this year."

"Last year it was five."

Ada slapped across to the corner of the room where the baby lay sleeping in a fruit crate covered with fine mesh wire. She tucked the cotton blanket around the small body knotted against the cold.

"I'll give her one more chance," Flagg said. "Ada, get your coat."

"It's snowing."

"Go down to the Wallers' and phone Miss Keyes and tell her I—"

"The Wallers won't let us use the phone," Ada said. "Not since you voted against his brother."

"Then go to the Uptons'."

"They ain't spoke since August."

Ada picked up the crib and started toward the bedroom. Lou Ellen went ahead and opened the doors for her. Flagg, trailing along behind, closed them.

"Well, I'll just have to let Miss Keyes go, I reckon," Flagg said.

"You'll like the new teacher," Lou Ellen said, and Ada glanced at her uneasily.

"I'll go up to the schoolhouse tomorrow and get her started off right," Flagg said. "I'll leave directly after I take Franklin and Edgar to the woodshed."

Ada turned back to him. "What they done?"

"I forget."

The bedroom felt like an icehouse. Ada Purdy put the crib down in the corner and wrapped two extra sugar sacks around the baby, while Flagg shucked off his clothes and sprang into bed, curling in a scratchy tangle of army store blankets.

"I was up to Molly's today," Ada said.

Flagg frowned at the mention of his brother's wife, but said nothing. He was working out his instructions for the new teacher.

"Molly give me a winter coat," Ada said.

"Thas good." *(Continued on page 73)*

Ada sat looking at the tree as though she were afraid it might vanish. "Thas nice," she said. "I'm glad the children will have a fit Christmas to remember"

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Year of JUBILEE

By WILLIAM ATTWOOD and SEYMOUR FREIDIN

ROME

THIS Christmas Eve, Pope Pius XII, attired in a white cope and miter, will stand before a bricked-up door beneath the portico of St. Peter's basilica in Rome holding a small ivory-handled silver hammer.

With this hammer he will strike the door three times. At the third stroke the bricks, loosened in advance, will topple inward. Quickly, attendants in blazing vestments will swab the threshold with sponges soaked in holy water, and the Pope, clasping a golden crucifix and lighted candle, will kneel at the entrance and intone the *Te Deum.*

In the great forecourt of the basilica, and in the vast piazza beyond, ringed by centuries-old colonnades, a huge throng of the faithful will be gathered, jammed shoulder to shoulder, holding its breath in dead silence to hear the echo of the Pope's hammer strokes and to catch the rich sound of his chant.

Then, with all the solemnity befitting the leader of a church nearly 2,000 years old, the Pope will slowly walk through the *Porta Santa* and disappear into the candlelit magnificence of the ancient, domed edifice.

Holy year, 1950—the twenty-fifth in a 650-year-old tradition—will have begun for the world's 350,000,000 Roman Catholics.

The ceremony at the Holy Door, dazzling with ritual and rich with symbolism, will be duplicated simultaneously by cardinal legates at Rome's three other major basilicas and will be witnessed by well over 100,000 pilgrims, including the entire Irish Cabinet. In the 364 days to follow, many hundreds of thousands more will flock to the city from as far away as Indonesia and the Philippines to reaffirm their faith at the altar of Catholicism and to gain the plenary indulgence accorded to pilgrims ever since Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the first holy year in 1300.

Those Catholics who demonstrate their faith by coming to Rome this year and fulfilling the prescribed ritual will receive the jubilee indulgence, a pardon which remits the temporal punishment due to sin after the eternal punishment has been canceled through the sacrament of penance or confession. In other words, if a pilgrim should die shortly after receiving this indulgence he would, according to Catholic doctrine, go straight to heaven.

A significant exception to the general pardon has been made this holy year. Vatican officials have announced that no indulgence will be granted to Communists or heretics unless they make public amends and show sincere repentance.

Holy year is a tradition that started late in the thirteenth century. The rumor spread rapidly through medieval Europe that one could gain a plenary indulgence by going on a pious pilgrimage to Rome. Eager to strengthen the influence of the church at a time when it was beset by hostile nobles and challenged by the apostasy of the King of Aragon, Pope Boniface promptly issued a bull—or edict—confirming the rumor, and further decreed that the indulgence would be renewed every 100 years.

Intervals between holy years were progressively reduced until 1475, when the present 25-year interval was established. With some exceptions, it has been maintained ever since. In 1933, for example, a special holy year was proclaimed to commemorate the nineteenth centenary of the death of Christ.

At the first jubilee, in 1300 A.D., more than 200,000 pilgrims, including the poet Dante and the painter Giotto, came to Rome, most of them on foot. Just how many will come this year is anybody's guess. Estimates range between 1,500,000 and 4,000,000—the larger figure predicted by Vatican sources, who know that a massive demonstration would greatly enhance the church's prestige.

"The pilgrims will show by their numbers and their attitude that never were Catholics so united in defense of the Papacy," Eugene Cardinal Tisserant said not long ago in a special holy year message.

And as Archbishop Valerio Valeri, chairman of the Vatican's holy year committee, told us in Rome, "We want this jubilee to be a manifestation of unity to impress the whole world with the strength of the church."

For Catholics able to make the journey, the jubilee will be an opportunity not only to receive general forgiveness of all temporal punishment due to sin, but to visit the ancient shrines of their faith in a year of rare brilliance and splendor.

For non-Catholics, it will be a vivid reminder that for pageantry, pomp and mass piety the Roman Catholic Church is still unsurpassed by any Christian faith.

For a world torn by ideological strife, the celebration will be evidence that the might of this majestic institution is irrevocably pitted against Communist materialism, considered by the Vatican to be the greatest threat to Catholicism since the Reformation.

Constantly on the defensive since the end of the war, the Papacy has seen its influence curtailed everywhere in eastern Europe. Often it has seemed impotent in the face of tough, zealous Communist rulers. In this holy year, the church means to dispel the notion that Catholicism is in retreat.

Secular sources are inclined to feel that currency problems, a shortage of transportation and the isolation of millions of Catholics behind the Iron Curtain are all factors which will put a crimp into what is intended to be the greatest jubilee in church history.

But, free of these discouragements, American Catholics will come in tremendous numbers, following their *(Continued on page 46)*

HIS HOLINESS, POPE PIUS XII, PHOTOGRAPHED BY KARSH, OTTAWA. COPYRIGHTED

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Cinderella Rides Again

By ADELA ROGERS ST. JOHNS

Continuing the story of a girl who didn't need a fairy godmother

The Story: All her young life, BESSIE KEEGAN had dreamed of the day when she would marry a rich man. It was the only way, as Bessie saw it, to escape from her shabby home and her dull job as a hairdresser in Tuckapack, New Jersey. She had looks, brains and no scruples, and she set out to make her dream come true. She quit her job to become lady's maid for MYRA MATTHEWSON. Nothing but the best would do for Bessie, and she determined to marry CYRUS SAYRE FALKLAND, the handsome heir of the Falkland millions, who had serious ideas about the responsibilities that go with wealth. Bessie stole a compromising letter written by Myra to CLIFF QUARRIER, an unsavory man about town. She took it to JOHN V. MERRYWEATHER, the hard-drinking society editor of the New York Chronicle, who was a close friend of Myra Matthewson's husband, MOOSE, and of MRS. ANTOINETTE FALKLAND, Cyrus' mother. Bessie threatened to expose Myra unless Merryweather found her a position where she could learn the ways of high society. He arranged to have her become the paid companion of a Washington socialite; and in a short time she was ready to go into action. Bessie blackmailed Myra into inviting her to a house party at Zydercliff-on-Hudson, Cyrus' country home. The other guests included HARVEY RUGGLES, a tycoon who was interested in Cyrus' political ambitions; and GERMAINE LANDIS, a beautiful postdebutante who was in love with Cyrus. No one recognized Bessie as Myra's former maid. She captivated Cyrus and, after a whirlwind courtship, they were married, over the protests of Bessie's father, JAMES KEEGAN, an honest and hardworking bricklayer, and JAKE FUCELI, a garage owner in Tuckapack, who was in love with Bessie and in whose safe Myra's letter to Cliff Quarrier had been secreted. After the wedding ceremony, Cyrus told Bessie that he had sold Zydercliff. He was appalled at the rage with which she responded to the news.

IV

WHEN Bessie Falkland, nee Keegan, woke up on the morning after her wedding, her first thought was simple: I am Mrs. Cyrus Sayre Falkland. She propped herself up on one elbow and regarded her sleeping bridegroom. His eyes were closed gently; his strong confident mouth was relaxed in a smile which gave him an unexpectedly boyish look.

Bessie decided it was pleasant rather than otherwise to find him there; he was the visible evidence of her simple first thought: I am Mrs. Cyrus Sayre Falkland. The rest of her thoughts were less simple and less pleasant. She slipped quietly out of bed, walked to a window and pulled back the fine linen drapes. Then she knew a moment of fury—like the one in the car when Cyrus told her he had sold Zydercliff. Her rage then had been a mistake, almost a disastrous mistake; and she knew she mustn't repeat it.

But looking through the window now made the temptation to rage very strong. She had never heard of this lodge of Cyrus' until he brought her here, but from what she had seen when they arrived in the dark she guessed she was not going to think much of it. It was a shrewd guess. At this moment she hated the lodge and everything about it.

Before her stretched a lake of crystal blue, surrounded by little rocky hills and green forests. Below her were rock gardens, and a little brook leaping to the lake. It was, she supposed resentfully, beautiful, if you liked that sort of thing. But what was it after all but outdoors? They were miles from *anywhere, from anybody, from anything.*

What kind of fools were these wealthy people, Bessie asked herself, that they used their wealth on such dull pleasures? They were all crazy to be outdoors. She recalled the conversation of women like Germaine Landis and Myra Matthewson. They talked forever about Sea Island and Bar Harbor, Palm Beach and Palm Springs, Cape Cod, Sun Valley and the Green Mountains. They spent their time traveling hundreds or even thousands of miles so that they could play golf or ride or shoot, or sail a boat.

But at least they did it in style. They went to places where people could see them and envy them their good clothes, their radiant complexions and their beautiful, beautiful leisure. Bessie's hand gripped the fold of drape angrily. What kind of honeymoon was this to be—two people all by themselves in a silly mountain lodge, with no one to look at them but the birds, and no one to envy them their riches and their leisure?

She turned and looked at the bed where Cyrus still slept, even though the sun was pouring into the room from the length of window where Bessie had parted the drapes. His hair was tumbled and his arm flung across Bessie's pillow, and he looked a lot more manageable than he had proved to be when she had lost her temper about the sale of Zydercliff.

She shouldn't have got so mad, or at least she should have hidden her anger. "You sold Zydercliff?" she had said, and her voice had been shrill, like the voices of the vulgar women who used to lose their tempers in the Rosebud Beauty Salon when something went wrong with a treatment.

"How dare you, without even asking me?" Bessie had demanded.

At the time, her title to Zydercliff or any property of Cyrus Sayre Falkland's was less than an hour old. But it was so real, she felt she had a right to challenge the disposal of her property.

Cyrus' eyes had been full of astonishment. "I didn't even know you when I arranged for the sale," he had said.

"You can get it back, can't you?" she had asked, with less shrillness and more coldness.

"No," Cyrus had said. "Zydercliff belongs to Harvey Ruggles now. I don't want to get it back."

"But you *have* to," Bessie had said again, desperately.

"No." Cyrus' voice was quiet and gentle; but it was the firmest no Bessie had ever heard in her life.

They had driven on in silence for about ten miles. Bessie caught one glimpse of her face reflected from the windshield by some transient trick of light. The image told her more definitely than the firmness of Cyrus' voice how much of a mistake she had made. Her pretty features were distorted by anger into sheer ugliness.

She had pulled herself together and somehow brought composure to her face. In a very small voice, Bessie had said, "I'm sorry, Cy. It wasn't for me. It was only that it was—where we first saw each other. You loved it so and you made me love it too. It was your home—"

And then she had begun to cry—a brilliant stroke. Cyrus stopped the car abruptly and put his arms around her. "Why, baby," he had said, "you're shaking all over. I didn't know it meant so much to you. There was a reason for selling Zydercliff, darling. I'll tell you about it later. Now we have more important things to do." And he had kissed her, with a passion that quite swept away Bessie's rage.

She was annoyed with herself even now that a kiss from Cyrus could make her forget more important things. She tiptoed over and looked at his sleeping figure, disturbed by many memories, very recent memories. Not disturbed in the old way, as Jake Fuceli had been able to disturb her with a shuddering excitement. In Bessie's scheme of values, love did not rate very high. It was, she had always been led to believe, more important to men than to women. But now she wasn't sure. She stamped her foot impatiently, and the sound of her heel on the floor woke Cyrus up.

He leaped from the bed, and Bessie stepped away, saying in a shocked voice, "Put on your bathrobe this minute. Suppose someone should see you."

Cyrus laughed joyously. "There's no one here but you," he said. "And you're my lawfully wedded wife—remember?" But he put on his dark maroon robe, made her a little bow and then kissed her in that disturbing way.

THAT afternoon he persuaded her to go for a sail on the lake. When they turned smoothly at the far end, Bessie could see the lodge, its timbered walls and perfect roof lines melting into the hills. The sinking sun caught the windows and turned them to sheets of flame.

"You could sell that, too," Bessie heard herself saying; she hadn't meant to, but her quick glance met only a broad and friendly grin.

"I might," he said. "About Zydercliff. My beloved and remarkable mama does not approve of the directions in which the times are moving. So—she hasn't moved with them. Much."

"Why should she?" the fabulous Mrs. Falkland's daughter-in-law said.

"She shouldn't—she couldn't," Cy said with a chuckle, "but you and I, my precious half-pint, won't be able to get away with benevolent despotism."

"Why won't we?" Bessie said.

"Well—thar they blow!" Cy Falkland said. "The times, I mean. Man'd be a fool not to know that and move with 'em." Looking at her, he lost the thread of his discourse. "D'you suppose it'll wear off when we've been married longer—say forty or fifty years longer?" he said.

His kiss held lusty satisfaction. The boat careened wildly and Bessie clutched him in terror. When he had righted it, he said, "The way I see it, the times are moving so fast people of our age, right in the middle of it, have got to get a practical point of view. I am all for idealism. But I am not sure some of the so-called idealists aren't just making a new power play. Huh?"

"Everybody wants power," Bessie said simply.

"Sonny and I decided the thing to do was to keep ahead of the trends," Cy Falkland explained. "The way this boat keeps ahead of the winds, if it's steered right."

He bent to kiss the ring he had so recently put on her finger. She saw that the back of his neck was red. She did not realize that, as a husband, he was unburdening his soul to his wife, trusting her as he had trusted his older brother.

"I'm not against the trends," he said. "I'm all in favor of the brotherhood of man—but it's not so darned easy to follow the economic principles of a man who could multiply loaves and fishes. I'm all for it, I can prove I am. But I say there'll have to be a moral and spiritual revival to go with it, protect it, or it'll end in a mess. I believe in industrial democracy and decent private enterprise. Probably the good things in America *(Continued on page 49)*

ILLUSTRATED BY ROSWELL KELLER

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The young Falklands arrived from their honeymoon in Europe, laden with boxes from the buying spree in the shops of London and Paris

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Into the TOWNS *and acros*

A few frills and furbelows have been added to the Sears, Roebuck selling technique since the company's early days. But, in the main, Sears still sticks to its time-proved principles. The basic formula first discovered by young Dick Sears in 1886 is used today in merchandising operations which gross $2,000,000,000 annually and make Sears one of the world's six biggest business enterprises. This week's final article in the series traces the Sears organization's expansion into the retail-stores field and its ultimate development of outlets in countries outside the United States

IT WAS just 25 years ago that the board of directors of Sears, Roebuck very reluctantly voted to put the great mail-order company into the business of selling merchandise over the counters of retail stores. Few of the directors were in favor of the new policy, and some of them fought it vigorously. To the old-timers, the very idea of Sears turning storekeeper was a sacrilege, and a dangerous one to boot.

Already the company was committed to an ambitious program of building new mail-order depots and expanding the supplier network; why risk a foolhardy adventure in retailing at the same time? What point was there in deliberately creating a new source of competition for the trusty catalogue, which alone was responsible for the company's annual gross sales of more than $200,000,000? Finally, why should a young newcomer be so anxious for Sears to squander its money and energies on the retail-store gamble?

The newcomer in question was General Robert Elkington Wood, and he really wasn't so very young. Indeed, he was a robust forty-five in 1924, when he quit his job as a vice-president of Montgomery Ward and moved over to Sears at the invitation of board chairman Julius Rosenwald. Wood admits that if he hadn't quit when he did, he almost certainly would have been fired. He had antagonized most of Ward's top management by continually harping there, too, on the need for opening retail stores.

Despite misgivings about the "newcomer," the Sears directors had to admit that Wood carried a formidable reputation. An Army man, he first made a name for himself as an honor student at West Point, later spent 10 years as the right-hand man of General Goethals in the building of the Panama Canal. Wood was in charge of the thousands of civilian employees working on the project, and also was responsible for their feeding and housing. His Panama record was so good that, during World War I, the Army called him back from France (where he was a colonel in the Rainbow Division) and commissioned him a brigadier general with the functions of acting quartermaster general and Director of Purchase and Storage.

In these capacities Wood was largely the director and architect of the Army's first centralized purchasing and distribution agency, and he came to know more about raw material sources, manufacturing facilities and the handling of goods on a grand scale than any other man in the country. So it was logical that at war's end one of his departmental subordinates (who happened to be a Montgomery Ward official) should urge him to come to Chicago for a career in the mail-order business.

Once oriented to the problems of selling goods to civilians instead of buying them for the Army, the general promptly made himself an authority on marketing. His favorite reading matter was (and still is) the U.S. census reports and the Statistical Abstract of the United States, which he virtually commits to memory. From bloodless tables showing the ebb and flow of population, bank clearances, commodity prices, wholesale and retail sales, and a hundred and one statistical minutiae, the general and his staff can predict with striking accuracy not only *what* business will be, but *where* it will be.

Wood sometimes becomes so engrossed in his studies that he may grab a handful of caramels (his inveterate confection) and chew them up without thinking to remove the wrappers. Indeed, when important matters are under discussion at business luncheons, he is apt to start nibbling a cigarette or to browse abstractedly on a paper napkin.

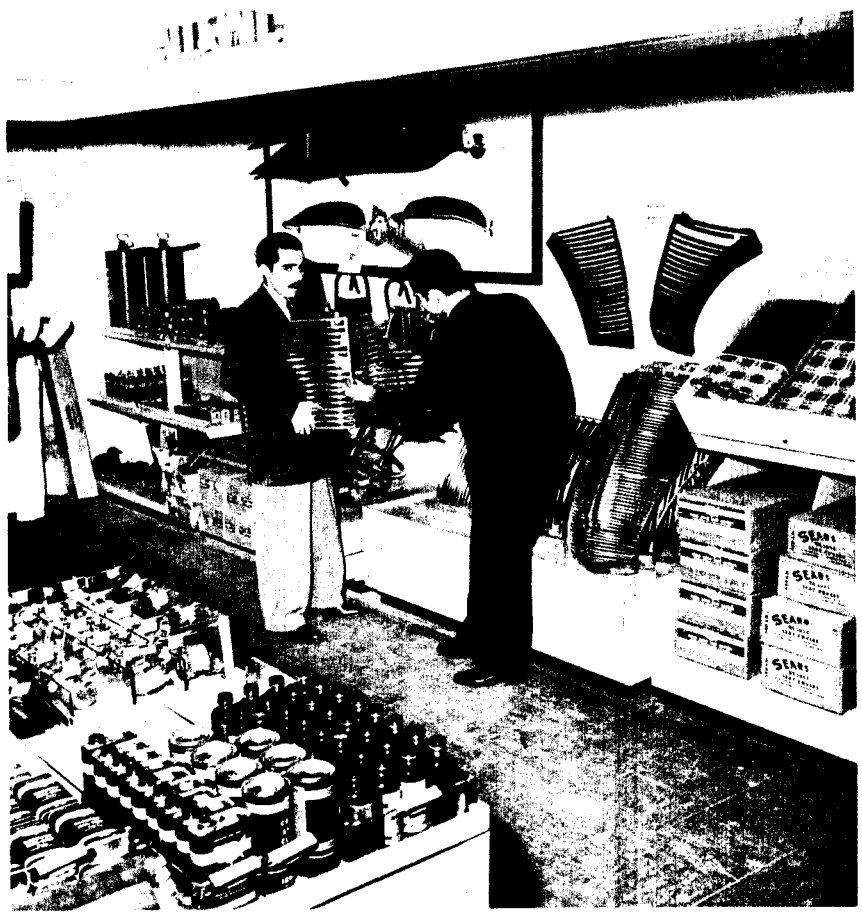
Auto Reduces Shopping Distances

Early in his researches, Wood came face to face with a potent new factor in merchandising which the mail-order houses somehow had failed to take into account: The automobile and hard-surfaced roads had given mobility to the once isolated farmer. No longer was a 10-mile trip to the crossroads general store an infrequent, all-day adventure; as the roads thrust ever deeper into remote farming country, tin Lizzies by the million rattled away on casual jaunts of 50, 75 or even 100 miles, and rattled home again loaded with town-bought goods.

Doubtless the farmers would continue to do the bulk of their essential buying from the catalogue, but it was clear that more and more nonessential or border-line expenditures would be made in the cities. Furthermore, it had been proved time and again that a customer seeing merchandise spread out before him in a store bought more items than he did when making out a list from the utilitarian catalogue.

Sears, Roebuck already had begun to feel the effects of this farm-to-city trend without realizing the cause. Business still was good, still profitable, but it wasn't increasing as fast as it should have in view of the sharp rise in general prosperity. Thus it was a psychological moment for General Wood to arrive on the Sears scene with his facts and figures. Finally the directors succumbed to his arguments.

In 1925 the first Sears retail store was opened in a corner of the Chicago mail-order plant, and by



The auto parts department of the Mexico City store. Sears has spent $12,000,000 on its program of expansion in Latin America

A Mexico City housewife studies a household appliance display. Sears hopes for stores someday in all key Latin American cities

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY VICTOR DE PALMA

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he BORDER

By FRANCIS SILL WICKWARE

Concluding THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SEARS, ROEBUCK

the end of the year six more stores were in existence. Among them, they accounted for $11,000,000 in sales the first year—a showing which surprised the general himself and was most soothing to the directors. During the next two years some three dozen additional stores came into being, and in 1928, General Wood became president of the company and ordered an all-out drive which resulted in the almost simultaneous building of 300 stores at a cost of $35,000,000.

By that time Montgomery Ward had taken alarm at the prospect of Sears blanketing the retail market, and had stepped into the ring with a $97,000,000 store-building program of its own. Presently the J. C. Penney Company also decided to expand, and there followed one of the most hectic periods in Sears history since the old days, when Dick Sears and Alvah Roebuck were scurrying around Chicago trying to get enough goods to fill their backlog of mail orders.

Real-estate scouts from all three companies swarmed across the nation in the race to snap up choice locations. Construction was rushed to such a degree that in 1929, Sears was having "Grand Openings" of three new stores each week. On one day it opened two big Detroit establishments, which drew 125,000 customers and sightseers.

By 1930 store volume stood at $160,000,000, and in 1933 the retail cash registers for the first time rang up more sales than the venerable mail-order business. Sears had a loss of $2,500,000 in dismal 1932, but for the five depression years (1930-35) its net profit was more than $50,000,000. The retail expansion program was mainly responsible for this unusual record.

While store building tapered off from the frantic pace of 1929, Sears ended the decade with about 500 retail outlets, all paid for out of earnings and reserves without a penny borrowed from banks or the stockholders. Since then, the stores have accounted for about 65 per cent of the company's annual sales volume, which last year zoomed to a record total of $2,300,000,000.

Larger Mail-Order Sales, Too

The most remarkable thing about this retail expansion wasn't the speed with which it came about, or the amount of money invested in it, but the fact that it created an enormous volume of new business without in any way competing with the established mail-order trade. While retail sales mounted by leaps and bounds as new stores were added, mail-order business was not left standing still. On the contrary, it has shown a gratifying increase closely correlated with general economic conditions.

In booming 1948, for example, mail-order sales stood at about $900,000,000 compared to only $225,000,000 ten years earlier. As a general rule, Sears knows that year in and year out mail-order business will be equal to 2 per cent of national farm income. This volume seems to be a mathematical certainty, and has not been affected by the retail expansion.

Just as Wood had agitated for retail stores because of the sensational popularity of the automobile, so he prescribed that the new outlets should be designed and located to appeal most of all to the motoring public. Sears avoided congested downtown shopping centers, instead planted its stores on main highways in suburban or outlying city areas, where real estate was comparatively cheap and

A sales girl in the Mexico City outlet works with a pretty model to help sell swim suits, lingerie, and sport clothes

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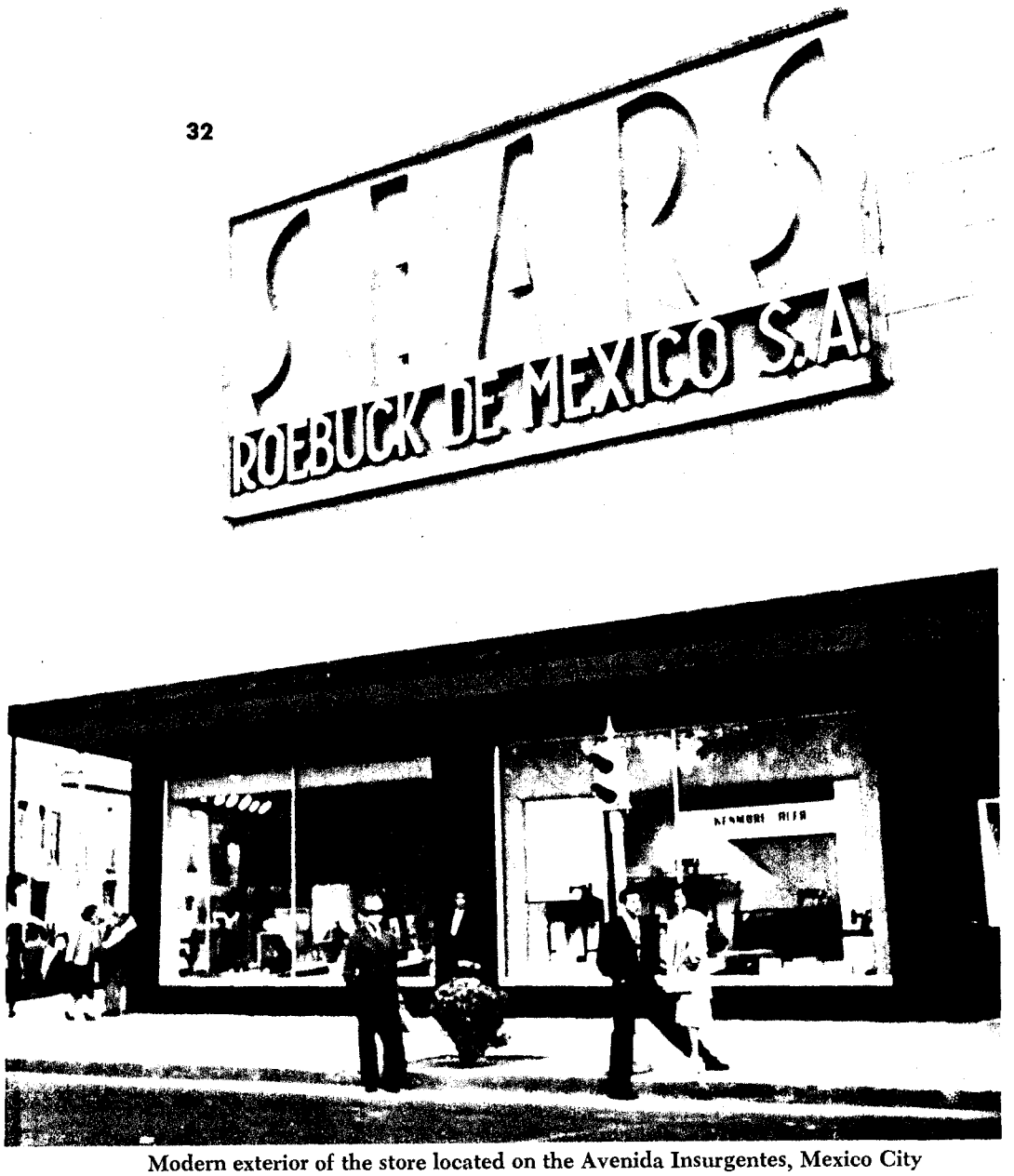
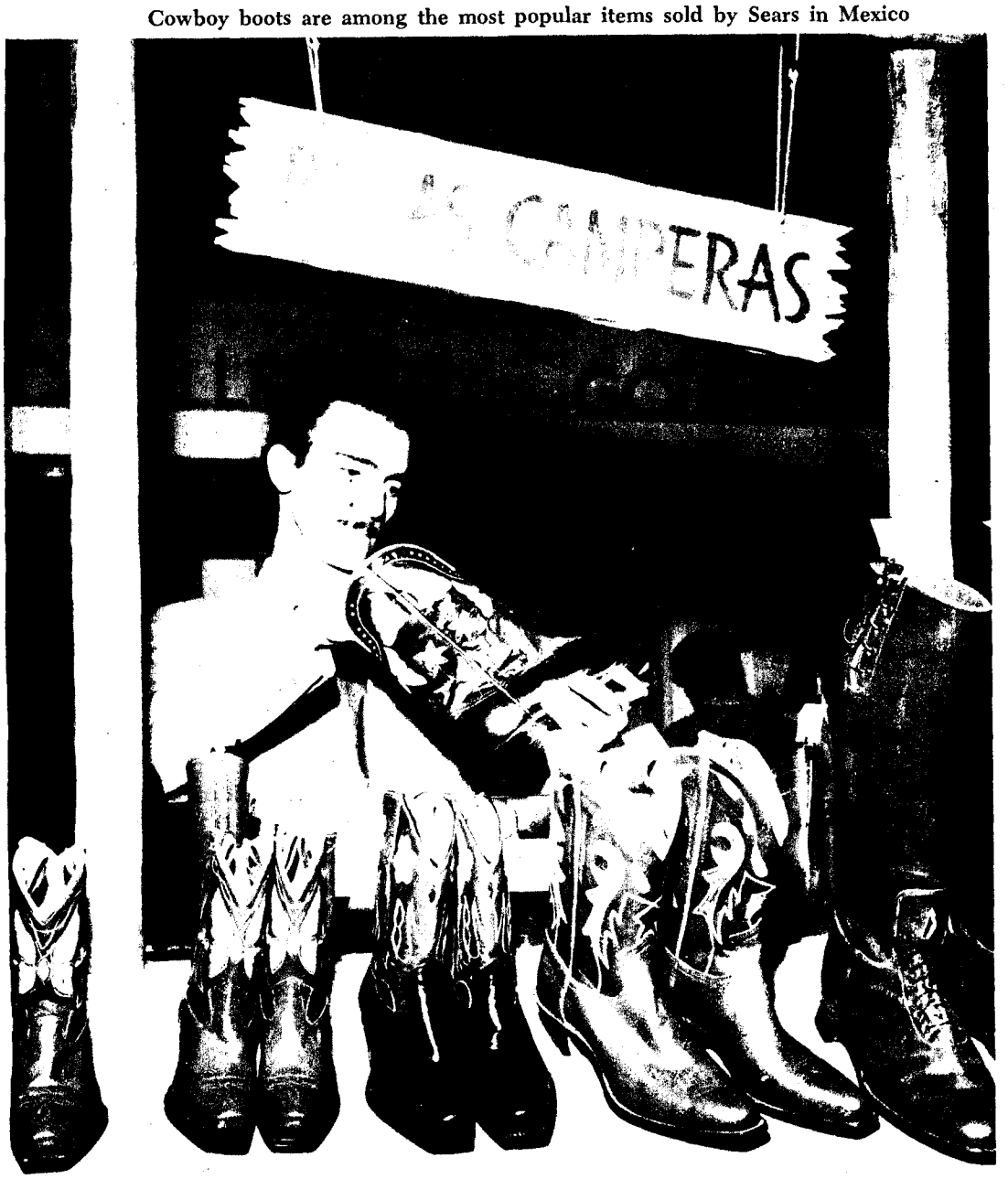


Modern exterior of the store located on the Avenida Insurgentes, Mexico City

Cowboy boots are among the most popular items sold by Sears in Mexico



where there was ample room for free parking lots.

At first, stores were built only in cities of over 100,000 population, where mail-order business barely existed and there would be no competition with the catalogue. The stores originally operated on a cash-and-carry basis and were stocked mostly with hardware, electrical appliances, sporting goods, tools, plumbing and similar "hard" lines.

But as downtown department stores began establishing suburban branches, Sears added more kinds of merchandise and dropped the cash-and-carry policy. Today its big-city "A" units are full-fledged department stores with regular department-store services. Below them come progressively smaller units (graduated according to the size of the community) down to the "C" stores, which carry only hardware and automobile accessories. All Sears retail stores take orders for catalogue merchandise, and in addition there are numerous catalogue offices for handling mail orders filed in person or by telephone.

Prices at the retail stores are traditionally about 6 per cent above those in the catalogue, but the stores nevertheless frequently undersell the competition.

The stores don't go in for loss leaders and giveaways to lure customers nor do they indulge in price wars with competitors. Instead, in retailing as well as in mail order, Sears relies on its ancient policy of always giving the best possible value on all merchandise, rather than intermittently splurging with below-cost sales of a few items. Where this policy won't work, Sears chooses not to compete at all.

In the beginning, it was General Wood's idea to have retail stores which functioned as nearly as possible on a serve-yourself basis, with none of the frills and chichi which add so much to the overhead of the typical city department store and hence to the cost of goods sold. In short, the Sears stores were to operate with the same price-saving directness and simplicity as the mail-order business, moving wares from producer to consumer with a minimum of waste in time and energy.

No More Self-Service

Today the stores remain fairly simple and frill-free, but the old idea of self-service has disappeared. Indeed, Sears now undertakes a lavish amount of service in some of its promotions, notably its current ambitious experiment of selling homes through the stores.

From the catalogue one can order basic materials for a five- or six-room prefabricated house for around $2,000, but from some of the retail stores (at present certain stores in the Northeast and North Central States) one can buy a six-room house with complete plumbing, kitchen and heating equipment.

Sears supplies plans and materials, helps in lining up a reliable contractor, and in arranging the financing through FHA. It also has a full-time co-ordinator to see that the job is done on schedule and according to the price estimate. The customer provides the lot and makes a small down payment. Total cost of the house runs between $6,000 and $10,000 depending on local building expenses, which may vary by as much as $2,500 per house between two towns less than 100 miles apart.

So far the home-building experiment has been on a fairly modest scale, but demand is so great that Sears expects to offer the new service throughout the nation as soon as adequate supply sources can be lined up in strategic geographic locations. Here is another example of the kind of enlightened self-interest which motivates so many of Sears's activities.

By providing guaranteed low-cost housing, Sears performs a much-needed public function, creates prestige and good will for itself by playing square with customers, opens up new markets for house furnishings and equipment, and gets more people into the habit of doing business with Sears.

Free Hand for Managers

One other noteworthy change in the retail stores has been the gradual trend away from complete domination by Chicago headquarters and toward local autonomy. In the early days the home office ran the whole show, and the individual store manager had practically no initiative. Now, however, managers have considerable discretion and rarely take dictation from Chicago. So long as a store returns a certain volume of sales and profits based on size, location and original investment, the manager has a pretty free hand, and can decide what to sell and how to sell it. Sears expects him to be not only an efficient and productive employee, but a leading (or at least respected) citizen in the community, and he is encouraged to join clubs and lodges, contribute to worthy causes, teach Sunday school, lead a Boy Scout troop, and otherwise act like a regular fellow.

With an annual profit-sharing bonus based on the showing made by his own store, plus salary and equity in the Sears Savings and Profit Sharing Pension Fund, the manager generally occupies a very respectable income-tax bracket.

World War II temporarily interrupted the company's retail expansion, but even before V-E Day, General Wood had readied plans for a big postwar program of both store and mail-order additions. As soon as construction work was possible, starting early in 1946, Sears spent $185,000,000 on new stores and mail-order plants, and simultaneously launched an all-out drive to build up war-depleted inventories.

Like the initial plunge into retailing, this recent expansion seemed foolhardy to many people in and out of Sears. The prevailing outlook among economists and businessmen was not hopeful. Most of them expected a sharp postwar depression like the one which nearly wrecked Sears, Roebuck after World War I; or, at best, they anticipated a short boom followed by a slump. Hence many companies waited while Sears charged ahead.

The result was not merely phenomenal; it was practically unbelievable. Before the postwar expansion the company already was doing an annual business approaching $1,000,000,000; yet in only two years this volume doubled, and in 1948 sales reached a dizzy peak of $2,300,000,000. Part of this was due to the speed with which the company's vast supply organization responded to the call for more merchandise, part to the store-building program, part to the fact that during the war tens of thousands of new customers had started trading with Sears after becoming disgusted

(Continued on page 66)

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LUCKIES PAY MORE

to give you a finer cigarette!

Yes, at tobacco auctions Lucky Strike pays millions of dollars more than official parity prices for fine tobacco!

There's no finer cigarette in the world today than Lucky Strike! To bring you this finer cigarette, the makers of Lucky Strike go after fine, light, naturally mild tobacco—*and pay millions of dollars more than official parity prices to get it!* Buy a carton of Luckies today. See for yourself how much finer and smoother Luckies really are—how much *more* real deep-down smoking enjoyment they give you. Yes, smoke a Lucky! It's a finer, milder, more enjoyable cigarette!

THOMAS A. JONES *of Mt. Airy, N. C., independent tobacco auctioneer, says: "At market after market, I've seen the makers of Luckies buy fine, ripe cigarette tobacco that makes a smooth, mild smoke. I've smoked Luckies myself for 15 years." Here's* more *evidence that Luckies are a* finer *cigarette.*

COPR., THE AMERICAN TOBACCO COMPANY

L.S./M.F.T.—Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco

So round, so firm, so fully packed—so free and easy on the draw

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DEFY DERMATITIS

During the war, The Springs Cotton Mills was called upon to make a special fabric for the medical department. It was impregnated with antibiotics and used in first-aid kits for self-applied bandages. This process has now been perfected for a full width fabric and is available to the false bottom and filibust business.

It is known as *MEDIKER* and is sold 37½″ wide, 144 x 72 count, and weighs about 3.10 yards per pound. It appears red with Mercurochrome, violet with gentian, brown with iodine, blue with ointment, and white with salicylic acid. If you are plagued with athlete's foot, bleacher burrs, poison ivy, locker room itch, rumble rigors, impetigo, porch patina, Spanish corns, wrestler's roses or park bench splinters, be protected by the SPRINGMAID label.

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SPRINGS MILLS

200 Church Street • New York 13, N. Y.

Atlanta Chicago Dallas Los Angeles St. Louis San Francisco

For a 1950 calendar showing 14 of the SPRINGMAID ads, send 50 cents to Springs Mills, Dept. C-16, at the above address.

ELLIOTT WHITE SPRINGS, *president of The Springs Cotton Mills, has written another book, "Clothes Make the Man," which was indignantly rejected by every editor and publisher who read it. So he had it printed privately and sent it to his friends for Christmas. After they read it, he ran out of friends, so there are some extra copies. It contains a veritable treasury of useless information, such as how to build cotton mills, how to give first aid on Park Avenue, and how to write advertisements.*

If not available at your local bookstore, send a dollar and postage to us.

He has also designed a sport shirt with 16 SPRINGMAID *girls printed in 6 colors on* SPRINGMAID *broadcloth. It is made small, medium, large, and extra large. Send us $3, and we will mail you one postpaid in the United States. Children's age sizes 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 are available for $1.25.*

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The Christmas Plane

By JOHN CONNER

North to the soldiers frozen in for the winter in our Arctic outposts, a flying chaplain bears gifts from home and trees—and the Christmas word: "God is with you!"

Chaplain Teska

THE plane, filled with small spruce trees and Christmas gifts, shook like an old jalopy under the insistent pull of its four engines until the ice in the brakes cracked into powder and fell away.

Then it rolled down the runway, wheels screeching through the wind-packed snow, propellers roaring with effort until the ground was gone. The Santa Claus of the Arctic was on his way.

As the plane leaned steeply to the left and climbed through the roof of clouds, Captain Glenn Teska, flying chaplain of the Airways and Air Communications Service of the U.S. Air Force, flicked open his safety belt and composed himself. For the next 4,500 miles, it would be his task to scatter cheer among homesick soldiers in the frozen North. Far from the fireplace soot of the cozy, brick-chimneyed neighborhoods of home, he and the crew of his plane would carry the spirit of giving through the mountain-filled clouds and blinding snows of a jagged land—risking their lives in winding, fog-filled fiords, coming to earth on gusty winds that would set the plane skating on icy runways.

The chaplain had started his Yuletide mission at McAndrew Air Force Base, Argentia, Newfoundland. On October 18th, he had written letters to the relatives of all the men in his enormous lonely pastorate.

"Each year," he told them, "we plan a special drop of Christmas mail from home, gifts and Christmas dinners for the men. Please mail your son's packages to this station before November 21st, and address them to Colonel John Doe."

When the gifts came in, they were marked for flying fields all the way from the Azores to the Arctic Circle: to Newfoundland and Labrador, Baffin Island, and the fiords of Greenland. Teska was a Minnesota Methodist but Catholics and Jews were as much a part of his flock as the Protestants.

The silver sides of the DC-4 couldn't have held another pine needle when the plane took off. The only empty space as Teska stepped aboard was a corner of the main cabin, hedged in by bulging parachutists' kits; just enough space was left to hold the chaplain.

Now, as he rested bones made weary by weeks of packing, the chaplain watched the time on his wrist and arranged his thinking for the greeting he would make on the radio to Cape Harrison, his first point of call.

Out the round window he could see, in the flitting sunlight, the frozen bogs of Newfoundland; then the ice-choked Strait of Belleisle, and the rounded hills of Labrador.

Suddenly there was the cape. Chaplain Teska got up, walked forward to the pilot's cabin and held the mike close to his mouth:

"A Merry Christmas to each one of you down there. May the richness of God's blessing rest upon you this season and throughout the year."

The chaplain's pilot cut a figure eight to line up his run, circling out to sea, then pounded around under the tops of the hills.

Back in the plane's main cabin, the rest of the crew sat and knelt by the open loading door with safety ropes around their waists, their feet braced to kick out the first of the Christmas packages.

The plane dived. The pilot raised a fist and snapped it down. The *(Continued on page 59)*

Wives and children of Fort Chimo's Eskimo laborers cluster about Chaplain Teska on his Yuletide visit

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I found old Mr. Conway waiting in his sock feet in his big old easy chair by the fire

The Red Sweater

OLD Mr. Conway sent for me to come down to his house. He lived neighbor to us, and he was old, and I guessed it was just another of the ordinary chores my mother had been sending me to do for him ever since I had been big enough.

When I got there, the old gentleman wanted me to take his old shoes over town to Mr. Gentile's shoeshop and get them mended.

While I waited for him to pull off his shoes, the car drove up, and a man and a boy got out and asked for a drink of water. While I showed them the spring and where the tin cup hung, I noticed the boy's sweater. The boy looked about twelve, which was my age, and the sweater was my size, and it was the most beautiful sweater I had ever seen. On the front was stitched in blue the figure of a great elk with high head and long horns.

While the boy was getting a drink, old Mr. Conway's two puppies started gnawing at his shoestrings. Then the boy turned and started playing with the puppies. After the boy got friendly like that with the puppies, I ventured to ask him where did he get his sweater and how much did one like that cost, and he said it cost three dollars, and told me the store over town and said they had a whole rack full of them.

As the boy and his father went back to the car, I heard the boy put at his father to buy him one of the puppies, but it seemed as if the father wasn't paying the boy any mind.

After they drove off, old Mr. Conway wrapped his old shoes in a newspaper. Then he dug in his pockets until he found a dollar and a quarter in change.

"Sorry, son," he said, "that I ain't got none extra for you to spend. The truth is, that is the last cent between me and the Judgment Day."

I knew that was so. I had asked my mother more than once why old Mr. Conway lived alone like that when he had children who could take him home with them.

Then she'd explain he did not want to go home with them. She said the old man loved his little house, and I would tell her I did not see anything about it to love. She would say that was because I was a boy yet, and could not understand the minds and hearts and feelings of old people. She said he could love the cracks in the windowpanes, and the saggy, mossy roof; that he could love the sigh of the wind in the weeping willow tree, and the laugh of the spring that giggled as it came from the red bank. "Why, to him," my mother would say, "the old place is drowsy with dreams and moldy with memories dear to his heart."

But all that made no sense to me. My fingers had ached when I had chopped his wood, and on this occasion my heart ached for a red sweater with the proud elk and the great horns.

As I took the old man's shoes under my arm and started down the road, he called from the door.

"Tell him to fix 'em while you wait," he called. "Tell him I'll have to sit by the fire in my sock feet till you get back."

As I went down the road, I kept thinking of the red sweater, and when I got home, I slipped into the kitchen and felt in the money cup on top of the kitchen cabinet. I always remembered to feel in the cup first, because we kids could tell it hurt our mother to ask her for money when she did not have it.

But this time I felt bills in the cup and ran to my mother. I told her about the boy with the red sweater and the proud elk with the great horns stitched in blue, and after a little while I had wheedled the three dollars out of her.

When I got to town, I went first to the big store the boy had told me about, and searched along the rack of sweaters until I came to a red one with the elk on it, and I bought it. Outside, I put it on. I did not run now. I walked slow and kind of proud, like the elk on my sweater, and held my head high.

Inside Mr. Gentile's shoeshop, I laid the old shoes on the counter. He unrolled them from the paper. He examined the old shoes. Then he looked at me and shook his head.

"Can't be fixed no more," he said. "Nothing left to sew the soles to."

He pushed them back. I took the old shoes under my arm and walked out.

FOR a little while I stood on the street corner with the old shoes under my arm. I could see the old man waiting in his sock feet in the little house in the bend of the creek. I glanced down at the old shoes that bore the shape of the old man's feet, and I wondered if these old shoes hadn't been even closer to him than his best friends on earth. The crowd jostled around me.

I began to walk slow around the block. In front of the big store, I stopped again. I felt of the one dollar and a quarter in my pocket. Then I pulled off my red sweater and went inside the store again.

"I decided I don't want no sweater," I told the man who had sold it to me. "I was just wondering do you have a pair of shoes, about the size of these old shoes, that you would trade me for the sweater and this dollar and a quarter." I even explained to the man who I wanted the shoes for and how his old shoes could not be fixed any more.

"Why, I know that old gentleman," the man said. "He's been in here several times. He always feels of a pair of soft shoes. I still have them."

He went back and pulled down a shoe box. I saw $4.50 on the end of the box.

"I just got this sweater and this dollar and a quarter," I said.

The man did not answer me. He just reached up and jerked down a pair of heavy, long, yarn socks, stuck one in each shoe, and wrapped the new shoes in the old newspaper.

I went out of the store, leaving my red sweater and the proud elk with the great horns lying on the counter, but I had a curious feeling inside me.

When I got back in sight of the old man's little house, I slowed down and considered. I thought of curious things and sayings. I remembered my mother saying the sunshine always seemed brighter just after a dark storm cloud, and how she said dark hollows were good places to look at the stars from, and how happy you could get just after a streak of sorrow.

I thought I might make the old man happier by first making him a little more unhappy.

I recollect to this day how I found him waiting in his sock feet in his big old easy chair by the fire.

"Mr. Gentile couldn't fix your old shoes," I said. "He said there was nothing left to sew the soles to."

What puzzled me was that what I said did not dim a curious gay twinkle I saw in the old man's blue eyes.

"That's all right," he said, "just give 'em here. I can manage in 'em a little while longer."

He took the old newspaper and unrolled the new soft shoes. I recollect how he felt of the soft leather with his old hands, and then some water came down his cheek, and he got up. He walked over to his bed and from under the pillow he got a red sweater with a proud, high-headed elk stitched on the front, and the elk had great horns.

"I saw you eyin' this sweater this mornin'," the old man said. "As the hunters came back, I hit that boy up for a trade. I traded him one of the puppies for his sweater."

I gave the old man's neck a long, hard hug, and then I broke for home with my sweater on to show my mother the elk with the great horns. THE END

ILLUSTRATED BY HERMAN GIESEN

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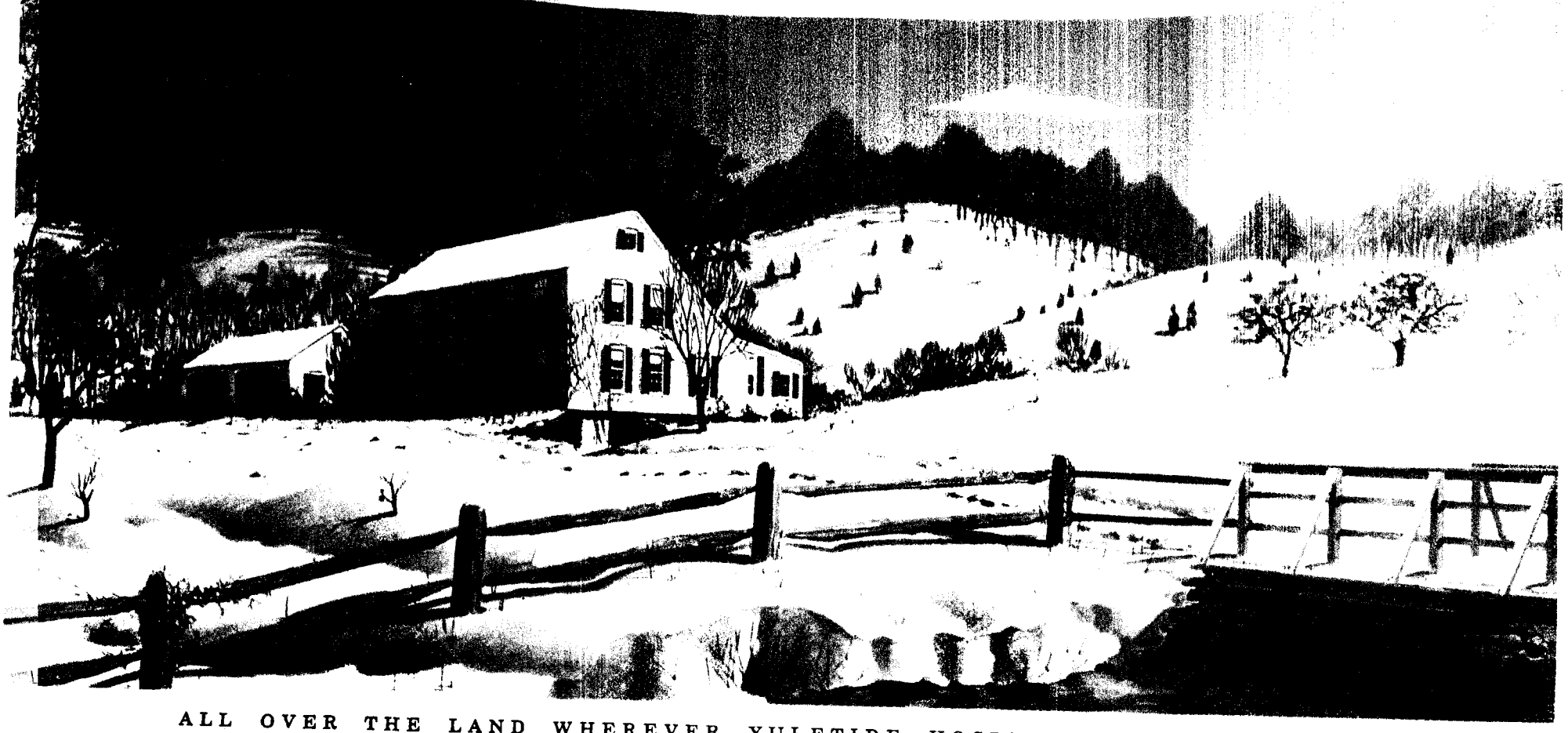
All over the Land...



ALL OVER THE LAND WHEREVER YULETIDE HOSPITALITY PREVAILS

It's Smart to Switch...so Give and Serve

Calvert Reserve

Lighter...Smoother...Tastes Better

BLENDED WHISKEY — 86.8 PROOF — 65% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. CALVERT DISTILLERS CORP., N.Y.C.

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SUGGESTIONS for traditional holiday festivities!

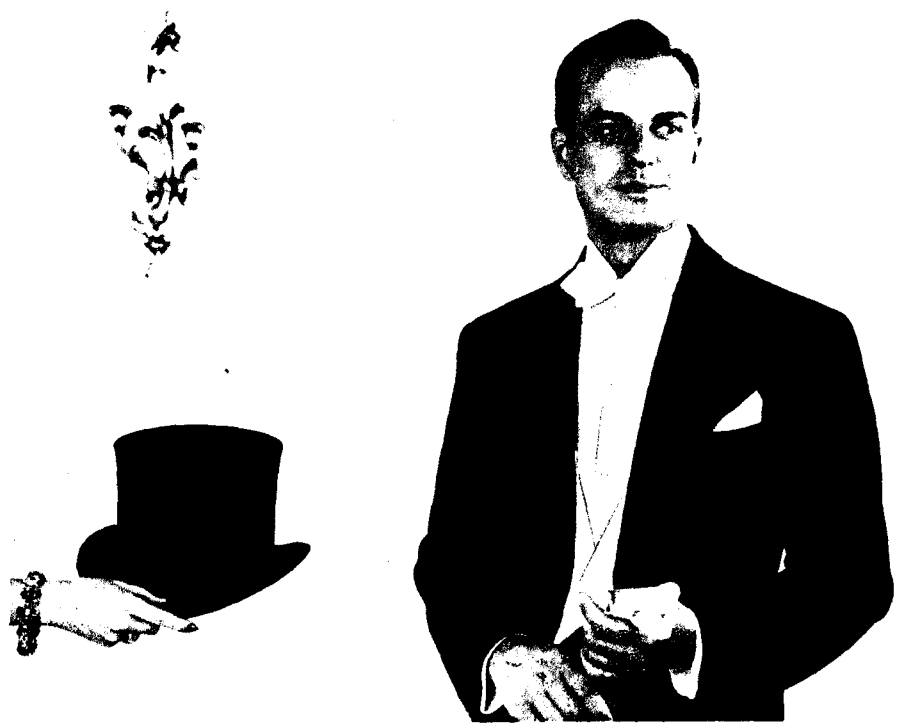
THESE beautifully made dress shirts are as impeccable in cut and styling as the Arrow shirts you wear by day.

They ALL bear the *Sanforized* trademark (fabric shrinkage less than 1%).

P.S. Arrow *also* offers—for evening wear—solid white handkerchiefs, dress ties, and collars.

If it's "Black Tie"...

Choose Arrow *Shoreham*—this fine tuxedo shirt is *comfort itself!* It has a neat, medium point collar and pleated bosom. Takes buttons or studs. $6.50



If it's "White Tie"...

Choose Arrow *Kirk* for the occasion. It's a full-dress shirt, correct 2-stud front, with starched piqué bosom and cuffs. $6.50

ARROW DRESS SHIRTS

Cluett, Peabody & Co., Inc.

The Pasteboard Star

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

"All right, it was you."

"Go on. Tell something else."

"Well—she wore a white dress."

Then Christopher had said that awful thing. "You mean like the picture in the dining room?"

It was like the picture in the dining room, and it must have been that the fear had shown in his face, because Christopher had shouted, "You're making it up. You don't remember any more than I do. You're making it up out of the picture."

"I'm not making it up! I'm not! I'm *not!*" He had said it fiercely, because of the queer feeling in his stomach. "I see her in—in—" He had been going to say the cave, but had pulled himself up in time. It was a secret promise that he would never tell anyone about the cave, because it was queer that when you told about things like that they never seemed so real afterward. That was why he ought not to have talked about his mother, for now it seemed, all of a sudden, as if she were not real at all.

"I see her in—in—the dark," he finished lamely, "and she has on a white dress—and she smiles at me—and—"

"You are making it up."

"I'm *not* . . ."

Just then Aunt Martha had come in.

"Boys, boys, can't you stop quarreling even on Christmas Eve?"

"He's telling stories again," said Christopher. "He says he sees her in the dark, and she has on a white dress—"

"Gregory!"

He had tried to look back at her, but her eyes frightened him. If he looked at them, they would take away the realness of his mother altogether, and then everything would be spoiled. The feeling about his mother that made him able to grow up, to be more like his father and sleep by himself and not mind about Aunt Martha being cross. Christopher and Alan were babies—they didn't remember, but he did. Now they were trying to take his remembering away from him, and he was afraid.

"Where's Daddy?" asked Alan brightly, just as if nothing had happened. "I want him to draw a boat."

"I'm sure I don't know where your father is," Aunt Martha's voice was high the way it got when she was tired, "but we can't wait any longer. You will hang up your stockings and go to bed." When she sounded like that, it was no use hoping about anything any more, and here he was, all curled up in the cave, and he didn't care whether it was Christmas Eve or not, because he had to remember, he simply ha to remember, before he could go to slee

Downstairs there were people movin about and a faint murmur of voices. Hi father had come home and they were trim ming the tree. Every Christmas, Dadd and Aunt Martha trimmed the tree. H knew that, but Christopher and Ala didn't. Santy Claus was a game Aur Martha played, and he wouldn't spoil i not for anything. He liked to play it, onl why didn't Aunt Martha ever like to pla his games?

HE SCREWED up his eyes tight. He wa thinking as if his mother's realness wa a game, and it wasn't. It was really real, nc just a pretend, like Santy Claus, and h must remember something that even Aur Martha would know was real, before h could go to sleep. He tried to make hi mind very still and empty, so that he coul remember the very first thing.

"No, you must tie your shoes yoursel You are a big boy now . . ." He remem bered that—sunlight in a room, and some one kneeling in front of him. Was it hi mother? Someone in a white dress? Bu it sounded like Aunt Martha's voice. "No you are a big boy, you must sleep in room by yourself . . ." No, it was Aur Martha, always Aunt Martha. The cav was dark and there was no one there bu Aunt Martha. Supposing they were righ and he didn't remember? He popped h head out from under the bedclothes. Fo the first time he was afraid in the cav and the room was so very dark that he wa afraid there too. He must not call, becaus that would wake up Christopher and Alar Only he was so much afraid that he woul have to do something about it quickly.

He jumped out of bed and very carefull opened the door. Perhaps, if he coul hear his father's voice, it would make ev erything all right again. It was dark in th hall, but just at the foot of the stairs warm, lovely glow streamed out from th library door. They were in there, trim ming the tree. He sat down on the to step of the stairs, curling and uncurling hi toes against the carpet.

"They are frightfully tarnished, and th tinsel is all matted. I'll get new ones nex year." That was Aunt Martha. Then hi father answered, only it wasn't exactly a answer, which was the way his father ofte did. "I had a hard time finding candle holders. Everybody uses electricity."

"Of course, it is much safer."

CHRISTMAS ZIUQ

A special reverse quiz for the jolly season. If you can't guess the questions for the answers below, see next page

Answers

1. Peppermint sticks, stuffed goose, cranberry sauce, plum pudding, oranges, spice drops, raisins and doughnuts on December 25th.
2. Tom and Jerry.
3. 11:48 P.M., December 24th.
4. Mistletoe.
5. A well-filled stocking.
6. (A) A mink coat and a house dress.
   (B) A set of golf clubs and a necktie.
7. A blue china vase.
8. Father's Day.
9. A large evergreen.
10. . . . and a Happy New Year."

—CARL H. WINSTON

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CHRISTMAS ZIUQ

See preceding page

1. **Why don't children eat well on December 26th?**
2. **Name two busy little helpers who get a lot more than just Christmas trees lit up on Christmas Eve.**
3. **What time is it when you suddenly realize you didn't get anything for Alfred?**
4. **Name something a fellow shouldn't need to kiss his girl on Christmas or any other time.**
5. **What is it children like to see on Christmas mornings that their dads like to look at any time?**
6. **(A) What does Mother expect and what does she get for Christmas? (B) The same for Dad.**
7. **What are you sure to get from Aunt Matilda, to whom you gave a blue china vase?**
8. **If Christmas is the Kiddies' Day, what do you call the day the bills arrive?**
9. **What size and color bank roll does one need for Christmas?**
10. **Complete this sentence: "Here's wishing you a very Merry Christmas . . .**

"I like real candles."

"Will you hand me one of those angels, please?"

He knew he ought not to listen, but he moved down a few steps. It wasn't as if they were saying anything important. All he wanted was to hear his father's voice, not what he said. It was beginning to make him feel safe again. In a minute now he would go back to bed, and be able to remember quite easily.

"I want," said Aunt Martha again, "to talk with you about Gregory."

He held his breath. All the safeness was gone, splintered into bits. There was a faint rustle of tissue paper.

"Oh, but the wings are broken!"

"Never mind," said his father. "Hang it just the same."

Perhaps his father hadn't heard. He was like that sometimes—you had to say a thing two or three times before he answered. He dug his toes into the carpet and waited.

"What was it about Gregory?" His father's voice sounded so gentle, as if he thought he were going to hear something pleasant.

"I'm having a difficult time with him. He is turning into a regular little liar, and I can't seem to get hold of him at all. He simply doesn't seem to distinguish truth from fiction."

Silence again. Gregory sat very still, only his heart was pounding so terribly, it seemed as if they must hear it.

"What sort of lies?"

"He tells the children the most impossible stories—tells them he killed a tiger on the stairs, and how he stopped a runaway on the way back from school."

"That's not exactly lying, is it?"

"Not lying? Well, there wasn't any tiger, and he certainly did not stop a runaway."

"No, but if there had been a tiger, he would have wanted to kill it, and if he had seen a runaway, he would have imagined himself stopping it, just as you or I would."

"Well, whatever you call it, it has got to stop. It is giving Alan nightmares, and now he has begun on something else."

There was the sound of a match. His father was lighting his pipe.

"He has begun," said Aunt Martha, "to tell stories about his mother."

There was a long, long silence. Gregory pressed up close against the banisters. He had a horrid feeling. It was just as if he were a rag doll, and they had him in there, passing him about, poking him, pulling him, and he could not make a sound.

"What sort of stories?"

"Well, tonight he said he saw her in the dark."

Gregory stood up. He could not stay, and he could not go, and something was going to happen.

"Perhaps," said his father slowly, "he wishes she were there in the dark."

"That is very different from telling the children that he sees her. It's not wholesome. Will you hand me the top piece to the tree, please?" Aunt Martha's voice was a little high.

"No—no—not that. That's nothing but a pasteboard star. It looks like a kindergarten toy. I mean that spike for the top."

Gregory closed his eyes. Something very queer was happening inside himself. He felt as if he were going to be sick.

"Try the star," said his father.

"But look, the silver paper is peeling off, and one of the points is—"

Afterward Gregory could remember nothing except that one minute he had been holding on to the banisters and feeling as if he were going to be sick, and the next he had been standing right there between them and shouting at them.

"I remember! I *do* remember. I made that star, and my mother cut it out, and we pasted the paper on it, and I sucked a red ribbon so it would go through the hole and she lifted me up so I could hang it, and you got to hang it . . . You got to hang it . . ."

Aunt Martha was standing on a chair staring down at him, and her mouth was open, and suddenly he had pointed his finger at her.

"I *do* remember and *you're* a liar, and you get out of here! . . . This is my tree and my mother's tree and you get out—*get out* . . ."

"Hush, Greg," said his father very quietly, and laid his hand on his shoulder. Everything seemed to be swimming a little, as if he were in the middle of a soap bubble and it was going to burst.

"I never in my life heard a child speak so to an older person," said Aunt Martha in a shaky voice.

"I'll handle this," said his father. He was helping her off the chair.

GREGORY stood alone by the tree. It was very beautiful. It moved a little as if it were in a wind. He heard the door close, and his father was beside him. He was going to tell him what a dreadful boy he had been. He was going to handle it himself, and that had never happened before.

His father was picking up something from the floor. He was putting it into his hands. It was the pasteboard star.

"Here, Greg," he said, "here you hang it. You climb up and hang it yourself."

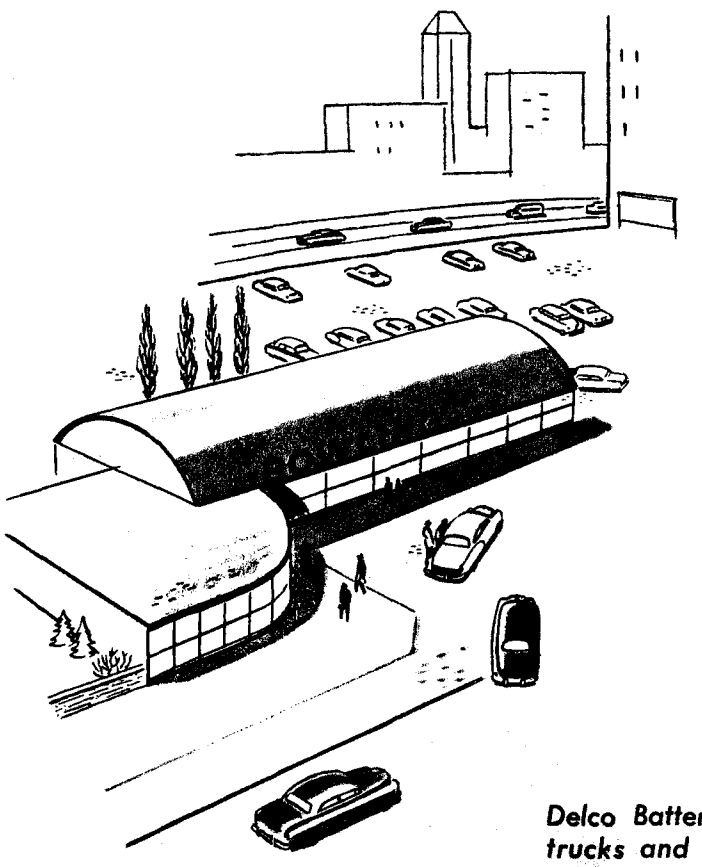
He climbed on the chair and hung it as high as he could. It was pretty high—one of the little branches next the top. It twisted slowly around on its red ribbon. It made him dizzy to watch it, so that he put out his hand to his father's shoulder. Suddenly their arms were about each other and, because he was on the chair and so very tall, it made him seem as if he were grown up, and his father the little boy. He laid his cheek against his father's head, so that he could hear what he was saying.

"Greg—Greg—I didn't know about your remembering . . . I didn't know! We'll never either of us have to be alone again!"

THE END

Replace with a

DELCO BATTERY



Delco Batteries for cars, trucks and tractors are sold wherever you drive.

DELCO-REMY *WHEREVER WHEELS TURN OR PROPELLERS SPIN*

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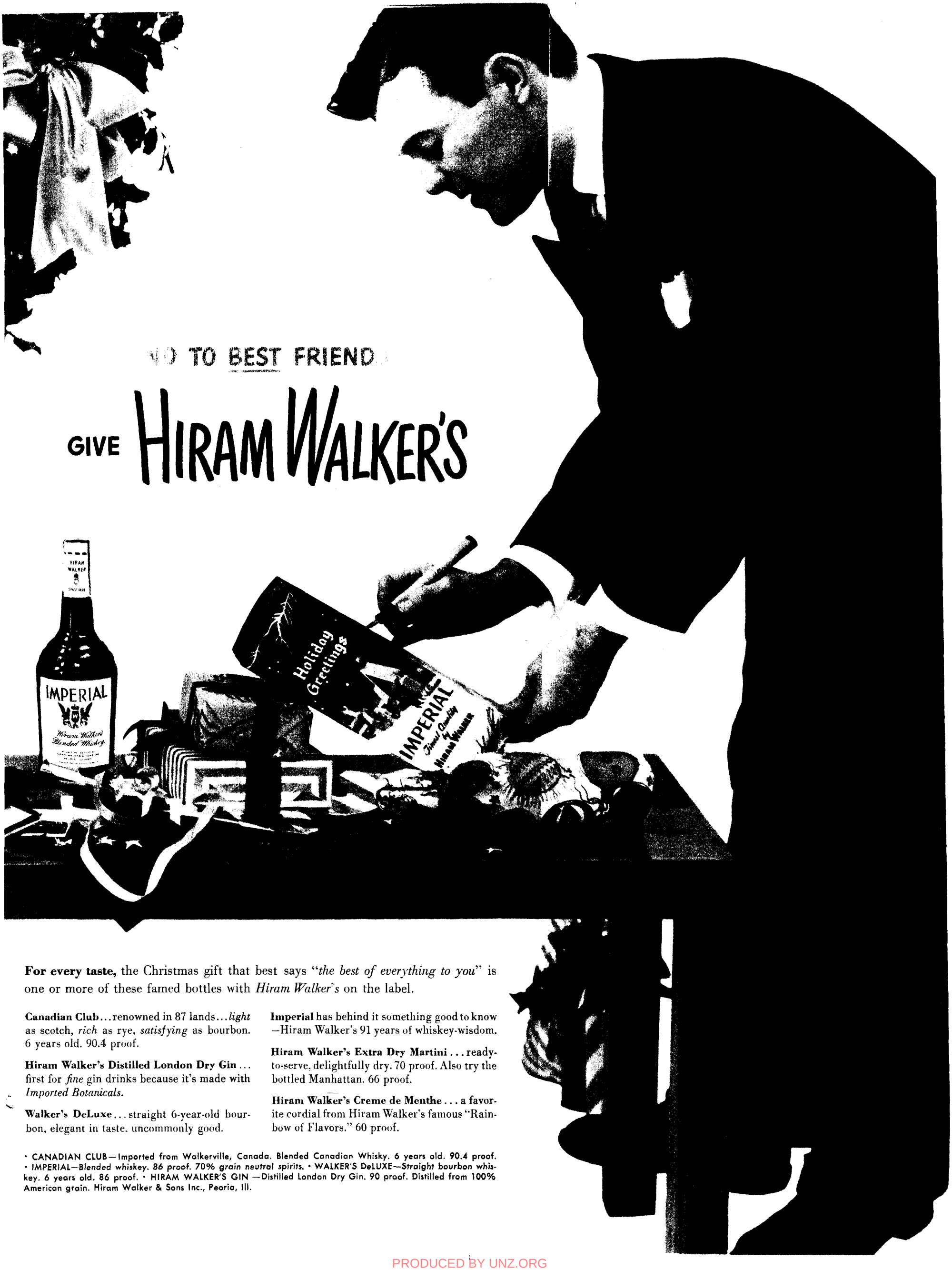

For every taste, the Christmas gift that best says "*the best of everything to you*" is one or more of these famed bottles with *Hiram Walker's* on the label.

Canadian Club... renowned in 87 lands... *light* as scotch, *rich* as rye, *satisfying* as bourbon. 6 years old. 90.4 proof.

Hiram Walker's Distilled London Dry Gin ... first for *fine* gin drinks because it's made with *Imported Botanicals.*

Walker's DeLuxe... straight 6-year-old bourbon, elegant in taste, uncommonly good.

Imperial has behind it something good to know —Hiram Walker's 91 years of whiskey-wisdom.

Hiram Walker's Extra Dry Martini ... ready-to-serve, delightfully dry. 70 proof. Also try the bottled Manhattan. 66 proof.

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• CANADIAN CLUB—Imported from Walkerville, Canada. Blended Canadian Whisky. 6 years old. 90.4 proof. • IMPERIAL—Blended whiskey. 86 proof. 70% *grain neutral spirits.* • WALKER'S DeLUXE—Straight bourbon whiskey. 6 years old. 86 proof. • HIRAM WALKER'S GIN —Distilled London Dry Gin. 90 proof. Distilled from 100% American grain. Hiram Walker & Sons Inc., Peoria, Ill.

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'Democracy' in the Deep Delta

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

In the 1938 Congressional elections, Plaquemines—voting on Perez-supported constitutional amendments—was better than 99 44/100 per cent pure Perez. Of 5,364 ballots, only three could be found against the measures. In Saint Bernard Parish, the showing was even better. Official records reveal: *none* against.

This sort of success is astounding in a democracy. Even Hitler didn't do better in his "elections."

It is so astounding that sometimes Perez' foes don't believe it.

When Judge Robert Kennon ran against Russell Long for the Senate last year, he got only 121 votes out of more than 3,100 cast in Saint Bernard Parish. Since the whole state-wide race was decided in Russell Long's favor by a close margin, Judge Kennon was understandably perturbed.

"They're phony and baloney!" he stormed of the voting returns from Saint Bernard.

"Why, I've got more than 121 personal friends in the parish who told me they voted for me," he agonized.

Even more agonized was the candidate who ran against Huey Long for nomination of Senator in the 1930 primary. In that race the political partisans of Saint Bernard Parish achieved a classic in election arithmetic. They counted more votes for Huey than there were persons registered. From 2,194 registered, investigators found, Long received 3,979 votes. There were even some votes left over for Huey's opponent, nine to be exact! (Perez was district attorney of Plaquemines and Saint Bernard at the time. He also was political leader of Plaquemines and an ally of Dr. L. A. Meraux, leader of Saint Bernard.)

Perez stands by his boys' election arithmetic and doesn't hold with recounts.

Loser Demands a Recount

Last year when candidate Henry G. McCall lost out for the state court of appeals by a hairbreadth—272 votes out of some 150,000 cast in seven parishes—he charged fraud in Plaquemines and Saint Bernard (among others) and demanded a recount.

Over my habeas corpus, was Perez' reaction. Quick to gird on his legal sword when outsiders seek to pry into Plaquemines and Saint Bernard affairs, Perez leaped into the fray as lawyer for the successful candidate. Thoroughly familiar with the election law, Perez convinced the district judge that he (the judge) had no jurisdiction in the suit brought by the unsuccessful candidate. There was no recount.

But how does the election machinery operate? In 1943 when Perez' foes showed up at the parish courthouse to take a hand in the election arrangements, they found the courthouse dark. The meeting had been shifted 30 miles up the river. Only Perez' friends showed up.

Bring suit?

"By the time the court gets around to it, the election's been held," one delta native told this writer.

Election Day in the delta has its own customs.

"Some families don't even go down to the polls," one native told me. "Their friends at the voting place know how they feel about things and take care of it for them." (The ballot is voted by marking with X's.)

But others may spend a whole day trying to vote.

In the bayou country, sparsely settled by oyster fishermen and fur trappers, the "voting booth" may be located back among the bays and lakes, hard for the "oppositionists" to reach. Oppositionists tell tales of starting out in the morning to go to the polling place. If they go by boat they may find that canals leading directly to the voting are blocked to them. Forced to make a roundabout journey, they arrive to find the polls have just closed for the day.

Even to native Louisiana writers like Harnett T. Kane, the deep delta is a never-never land of "problem parishes."

But Perez, district attorney and political boss, is satisfied that honest elections are assured.

"We have a standing offer of $1,000 reward for information leading to the buying of votes in Plaquemines," he says. . . .

"I always take the offensive," says Leander H. Perez. "The defensive ain't worth a damn."

The seventh of a delta planter's 13 children, Perez launched his offensive on the world at the age of twenty-four. Fresh out of law school, he challenged the triumvirate of bosses who had ruled the deep delta with an iron fist since the revolt against the carpetbaggers in 1892.

Into the sparsely populated bayou country where thugs often cracked oppositionists' skulls, young Perez carried his offensive.

"Believe it or not, I'm a reformer at heart," he says.

So by boat and by foot, from the crown of a river levee or from in front of a crossroads store, the youthful reformer blasted political bossism. The triumvirate (he charged) stifled all opposition, refused to recognize citizens' rights, controlled the elections which seldom registered less than 90 per cent majorities for the machine.

For his crusading pains, young Perez came out with a handful of votes. But he won a reputation as a daring young "good government" man. This paid off three years later when reform Governor John M. Parker named young Perez to fill an unexpired term in the local district court.

But Perez needed another offensive to hoist himself up on the bench. With his cousin John R. Perez, who had helped him get the appointment (John Perez was a leader in Parker's reform administration), Leander started for the courthouse to get himself sworn in. But when he got there, the courthouse was bare. His machine rivals, disregarding the governor's appointment, had already sworn in a rival jurist named by the Chief Justice of the state Supreme Court. Louisiana politics can be full of surprises.

Undaunted, Perez had himself sworn in on the courthouse lawn. Then he unlimbered his law books and launched his first major legal assault. Before the Supreme Court he argued a point of law: If an elective office is vacated with a year still to run, the governor can appoint a successor. The Supreme Court agreed with young Perez.

He ascended the bench. Now, Perez had a grand jury behind him in his battle with the entrenched political machine. With grand-jury action as a threat, next year when Perez ran for re-election the voting was honest—for the first time since 1892, observers noted. Perez, elected, was on his way.

A district court in a country parish is usually a quiet place where ordinary legal business drones its routine way. Under young Judge Perez it became a turbulent arena. First, Perez cleaned out the protected commercial gambling run by his political foes in Saint Bernard Parish. Then he caused the registrar of voters (another political enemy) to be haled before him. The charge: refusal to register oppositionist voters. Next, Judge Perez himself was haled before a court—the Louisiana State Supreme Court.

His political enemies sought to impeach the young judge. They gave this version of how Perez ran his court:

He acted as investigator, prosecutor and judge—all in one—it was charged. He was accused of keeping a pearl-handled revolver beside him on the bench, of lobbying in Baton Rouge, of favoring his friends from the bench, of punishing his enemies. There were 23 charges in all.

"He tried to put us in jail because we're against him politically," said one accuser. "If this isn't highhanded dictatorship, then I don't know what is. Perez is a dangerous man to have on the bench."

"Political plot!" cried Perez. He accused his enemies of lying and, in detail, told of political graft.

The state Supreme Court prepared to try a district judge on ouster charges for the first time in 50 years and for the second time in Louisiana history. The justices built themselves a witness stand in the high tribunal and settled down to hear the dozens of witnesses expected from the delta country.

It was a legal free-for-all.

For three weeks witnesses scrubbed Plaquemines' political linen before the state's highest court. Even as a defendant Perez took the offensive. He peppered his accusers with so many charges that soon they were defending themselves as busily as he was.

Then, with the impeachment trial in full swing, with charges and countercharges flying thick and fast, dramatically and suddenly the trial was over.

The prosecution had moved to dismiss. No explanation.

An explanation Perez gave this writer was that his enemies could not support the charges. Asked if his accusers had not been charged with possible irregularities, Perez said this was true but that the incident was not used to influence discontinuance of the case. Perez' foes learned, during the impeachment fracas, that they had, in Perez, a man to reckon with.

The reckoning came the same year. Perez crushed the triumvirate of political bosses who had ruled the delta for a quarter century. He turned his back to the bench, was elected district attorney and carried with him into office his own slate of candidates for judge and police jury. So successful was Perez that he even swept into office as district judge a candidate who was then a fugitive from justice. Perez was master of Plaquemines.

A half-dozen years later all Louisiana too knew that it had in Perez a man to reckon with. For, so much did Perez learn from his own impeachment ordeal that in 1930 he saved Governor Huey Long's political life.

An Alliance with Kingfish I

Perez met Long after Kingfish I ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1924. Both were reformers, fighting the Old Ring (regular Democratic machine). Kingfish I had a shrewd eye for ability, and between Long and Perez it was mutual respect at first sight. Perez tied the delta's political fortunes to the tail of the Kingfish.

Elected governor in 1928, Long was in difficulty soon after. When it looked as if impeachment might put Kingfish I on ice, Perez hopped a train to Baton Rouge.

Perez found Huey Long in his rooms at the Heidelberg Hotel in bed, face downward, his eyes red as from weeping.

"I hardly recognized the poor fellow," Perez relates. "He was haggard, and he hadn't had a wink of sleep for nights."

Perez lost no time in idle commiseration. An offensive was indicated. Perez reached for his trusty weapon of offense, the law. From the small library of lawbooks adjoining the prostrate Huey's bedroom, Perez took down one covering removal from office and impeachment proceedings. From the legal tome, Perez drew the germ of an idea that was to save Long.

At Huey's bedside, Perez expounded the impeachment law.

"My views seemed to reassure him," says Perez.

From the posture of despair, face down, on his stomach, Kingfish I flipped over on his back and was soon lost in refreshing sleep, his first in days.

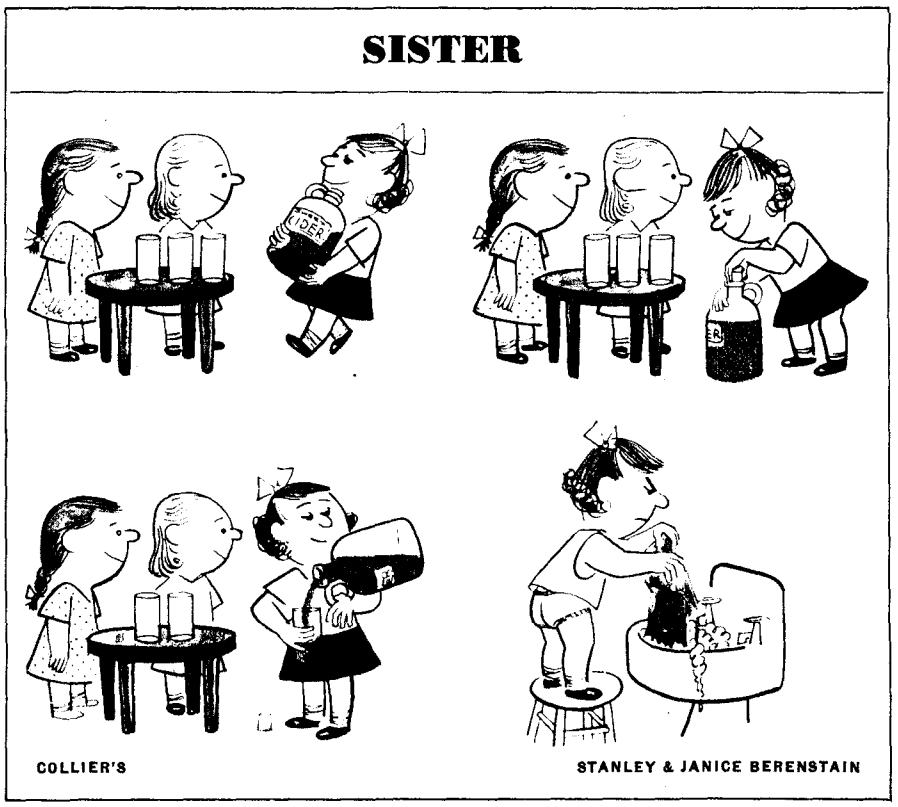
Under Louisiana law, the House of Representatives (of the legislature) draws up the articles of impeachment, and the Senate tries them. Perez now plunged into the bedlam that raged in Baton Rouge as the Lower House debated the evidence on which to draw the impeachment articles.

Daily, Perez held a pep rally with Long's contingent in the Lower House and sent them forth to raise legal technicalities with which to slow down the impeachment debate. Perez had a plan. The debate was being waged during a special session which, under the law, ends on a date set by the governor when he calls the special session. If the impeachment trial could be prolonged beyond the governor's announced closing date, Long would be saved.

"The legislature would stop being a law-making body and become just a crowd of men," Perez explained.

On the day set by Long's foes for the impeachment vote (in the House) Perez and the Long contingent were ready.

"As the impeachment resolution was



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A METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER PICTURE

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read," Perez relates, "our 30 legislators all jumped up at once. They shouted and booed and raised hell. They took the opposition by surprise and caused them to withdraw the resolution and redraft it." (Lawyer Perez' contention was that Long could be tried on only one charge at a time, not the lumped charges made by his foes.)

Then when the impeachment was voted and Long awaited trial before the Senate, Perez prepared the *coup de grâce*.

Long's ouster on charges of "misusing state moneys," "gross misconduct in public places," "habitually carrying concealed weapons," "coercion" and others seemed certain. The Lower House, close to the people and reflecting public opinion, had voted impeachment. The required two-thirds majority in the Senate seemed ready to go along.

"Huey's a dying duck. Too bad," was the street talk.

But again, Perez was on the offensive. He organized the famous "Round Robin" of 15 Senators. Banded together, these lawmakers announced that they would *not* vote for impeachment regardless of the evidence. Since a two-thirds majority was needed to impeach, the Round Robineers' 15 nays doomed it in advance.

On what grounds did they take this stand?

The special session of the legislature had expired, they argued. It was no longer a lawmaking body, just a crowd of men.

The legislature gave up and went home.

The 15 Round Robineers went on, some to becomes judges, others to get lucrative legal fees and, for their constituents, windfall public work. Long went on to launch the wild Louisiana Hayride which ended in death for him and prison terms for some of his chief, boodling henchmen. Perez, now a proved legal strategist of high rank, went on to become the biggest political powerhouse behind the Louisiana scenes.

During the next 10 years he consolidated his political mastery of the deep delta and built a fortune reputedly in the millions.

Two Names for the Same War

Then, during the war, Perez took Louisianians' eyes away from Europe and the Pacific with a vest-pocket war of his own. New Orleans newspapers called it a "Perez *Putsch*." Governor Sam Jones called it "insurrection and rebellion." Perez called it "resistance to Gestapo methods."

Louisiana's Little War started in 1943 when Governor Sam Jones appointed and sought to install a sheriff to replace one who had died in Plaquemines.

Jones was the governor who only a few years before had sought to pry into Plaquemines' (and Perez') affairs with an investigation into the leasing of rich oil lands belonging to public boards in the parish. Leases on public lands had been granted to individuals and companies for which District Attorney Perez had become the lawyer. The governor wanted to look at the leaseholding companies' books. Perez blocked him.

Now the reform governor was butting into Plaquemines again. If he succeeded in installing his sheriff, Plaquemines would have its first anti-Perez official in Perez' political regime. Perez said the governor was out of bounds legally and insisted that his man, the local coroner, was the legal successor.

Perez' sheriff and deputies locked themselves in behind barricaded doors in the courthouse and posted armed guards outside. As a further precaution, Perez went before the Plaquemines district judge—sitting in the same courthouse—and obtained an order barring the governor's man from taking office. (The judge was suspended temporarily several months later by the state Supreme Court as an "interested party.")

Up to the Supreme Court the governor's sheriff took his case. Meanwhile the governor, with the National Guard away to war, ordered the newly formed State Guard to limber up with a few drills. On the alert in the delta, Perez started drilling too. If the governor could have an army, so could he. His parish police jury (governing body) proclaimed a "Plaquemines Parish Emergency Patrol," empowered to "bear arms concealed or openly."

Perez rallied every able-bodied man, and specifically the local American Legion post, to resist invasion.

Down came the state Supreme Court opinion.

"There is no doubt that the governor had the authority to appoint Blaize (Walter J. Blaize, the anti-Perez man) to the office of sheriff . . ." said the highest tribunal.

But Perez would not climb down from the barricades. Technically, the Supreme Court's opinion was not binding, he argued. The court had rendered no decree. Besides, the governor's man did not bring the proper suit to test squarely who had the right to the job, said Perez.

From Camp Pontchartrain in New Orleans a convoy of a dozen trucks, bearing a few hundred State Guardsmen in battle dress, moved on Plaquemines. At its head was a brigadier general. An armored scout car prowled in front. Tractors rumbled along behind to clear the enemy's roadblocks and fortifications.

At the entrance to Plaquemines, the state troops "made contact" with parish forces: three armed sheriff's deputies who had stood behind a parish stop sign and halted all traffic. The deputies were disarmed and hustled into a staff car. One vainly tried to serve the guard officers with a court writ restraining the military.

Midway to the parish courthouse, the State Guard found the road blocked. In front of the Perez home on the Promised Land Plantation, trucks had been driven into the ditches on either side of the road. A third was stalled between them on the highway. For some time, everyone who traveled the highway had to detour into Perez' backyard and pass inspection by armed guards posted there. Stopping there the day before, reporters found a dozen guards in the Perez home. The yard and the highway swarmed with armed men. Mrs. Perez, unperturbed, was serving up a roast-chicken dinner.

Now, as the guardsmen deployed in front of the barrier and an armored car headed straight for it, armed defenders behind it were seen to flee. A tractor cleared the road, and the war went on.

Down the road a piece the State Guard ran into a barricade of fire. The Plaquemines forces had dumped several truckloads of oyster shells (used in road surfacing) across the road, soaked the pile with gasoline and set it afire. Guardsmen got out of their trucks and shoveled this barrier aside.

As the military convoy rolled into the parish seat, Pointe a la Hache, some 75 men with Perez at their head evacuated their courthouse citadel. Perez had called for a mass meeting of citizens. But with the military on the way, the deltans thought it wiser to stay home. Perez' Plaquemines Parish Patrol retreated to the free parish ferry and backed away into midstream. Plaquemines fell without a shot.

But the parish was not entirely undefended. Encamping in Plaquemines, the guardsmen sent an emergency call to New Orleans.

"Rush mosquito lotion," they pleaded.

With the governors' sheriff installed under martial law, the nonshooting war in Plaquemines was over. But the war of words had only begun. Both sides filed charges against each other of "conspiracy to murder." Busily, lawyer Perez fired away in the courts, and at one time had 15 suits going at the same time; against the governor, against the militia, against the sheriff, against the state Attorney General.

COLLIER'S "Penberthy, go in for Taber!" JERRY MARCUS

The governor's sheriff, installed in office, appealed to the Supreme Court to stop some of Perez' suits. Siding with Perez, the Supreme Court said, "No."

And in the end, Perez again had the last word.

A judge from outside Plaquemines, sitting in the Plaquemines courthouse while troops patrolled outside, ruled that Perez' man—not the governor's—was the legal sheriff after all. (The governor had appointed his man legally all right, ruled the judge, but the sheriff had neglected to qualify properly.) Besides, the same judge ruled later, the state militia had no business in Plaquemines in the first place. The civil power was superior to the military. The judge ordered the troops out. By that time four months of martial law had elapsed, and only a handful of State Guardsmen remained in the parish. Next month, Governor Jones ended martial law altogether. In the election soon after, Perez' man was elected and took undisputed office. The governor's man wasn't even paid for the hectic time he spent in office.

Perez never forgave Governor Jones.

When the war was over (the country's war, not Perez') he looked for a man with whom to beat Jones and found him in Earl Long, younger brother of Huey. Perez named most of the candidates on Long's slate ("to strengthen it") and, behind the scenes, guided Long's campaign.

"I stuck close to Earl so he wouldn't make mistakes," says Perez.

President Truman is another man Perez can't forgive.

"I'm a Democrat," says Perez. "But I don't go along with the radicals who have taken over the national government."

Radical to Perez, in President Truman's Administration, is the federal fight for the riches of oil in the tidelands off the states' shores. Radical, also, to Perez is proposed civil liberties legislation.

Delving into Colonial Lore

Against the government, on the tidelands oil issue, Perez has turned out to be a brilliant and lucidly plausible antagonist. With a scholar's love for the law, he rummaged through Washington bookshops for contemporary works on colonial history. He reread Benjamin Franklin's autobiography and pored over the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention. His object: to find out who had original title to the tidelands.

Perez' devoted scholarship was rewarded. He discovered a 1782 treaty between the British crown and the original states (then banded in the Congress of Confederation). The treaty acknowledged the states as "free, independent and sovereign," and relinquished to them (as such sovereign states) the crown's "territorial and proprietary" rights. Perez argues from this that the United States government never had title to the tidelands, and such underwater lands have always belonged and still belong to the states.

Against the Administration's fight for civil liberties legislation Perez (as the head of the Dixiecrats and their voice) has been less plausible.

Before a Senate committee, Perez argued that enforcement of civil liberties legislation would require "a federal Gestapo" that would soon transform America into a totalitarian state. To clinch his argument he cited provisions from the Soviet Union's constitution which call for "equality of rights" to all citizens of the U.S.S.R.

"I want to file these articles (from the Soviet constitution) in the record," Perez told Senate committeemen.

Here, the committee chairman, J. Howard McGrath (then Senator, now U.S. Attorney General) observed:

"We will file that right beside a paragraph from our own Constitution guaranteeing these rights."

As head of the Dixiecrats, Perez says he is fighting to keep the federal government out of state and local affairs and to preserve local self-rule.

Most Americans would agree with Perez that local self-rule is the foundation of our democracy. But under the kind of self-rule that exists in the parishes bossed by Perez, citizens of the delta have had to appeal to the federal government to safeguard their rights.

One delta citizen, still trying to register after months of fruitless effort, appealed to the federal district attorney and even to the President of the United States. Other delta citizens, protesting elections which gave the local machine over 90 per cent majorities, year after year, have called for —and at least once obtained—federal investigators to watch the balloting.

Perhaps Perez' kind of rule is asking for what Perez hates most: federal intervention. THE END

Next Week

BEGINNING—

Rescue Below Zero

BERNT BALCHEN'S DARING ARCTIC AIRMEN

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Hell-Bent

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Year of Jubilee

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

mitered bishops in diocesan pilgrimages or journeying alone with their families. Over the holy year of 1950 they will probably make up one of the largest of foreign delegations to the Holy City.

In 1925, the last regular holy year, nearly half of the 70,000 foreign pilgrims came from Germany and the Slavic countries. This year there will be only a thin trickle from western Germany and none at all from Soviet Europe—or from unruly Yugoslavia. Pilgrimages in the "peoples' democracies" go to Moscow, not Rome.

Whispering Campaigns Begin

Italian Communists have already started two whispering campaigns aimed at discrediting this lavish manifestation of faith. One is to encourage rumors that at least five or six million pilgrims are expected—so that the jubilee can later be ridiculed as a failure if the figure turns out much lower. The other is to foster reports about the material hardships in store for pilgrims in Rome in an effort to discourage Catholics from making the trip.

This is one rumor the Vatican should be prepared to spike effectively. In whatever numbers the pilgrims come, they will be assured of adequate housing at nominal cost. All last summer and fall, Vatican committees, in co-operation with the Italian government, had been busily building hotels, procuring sleeping quarters, arranging for transportation and carefully spacing organized pilgrimages so that too many large groups won't be converging on Rome at the same time. In May, for example, when 30,000 French Catholics are expected to attend the canonization of Jeanne de Valois, fifteenth-century queen of France, they will pretty well have the city to themselves.

New buildings have been going up all around the Vatican. At each end of Bernini's famous colonnade will be two large exhibition halls housing expositions of religious art, Catholic charities and the arts and crafts of native missions.

Along the Via della Conciliazione, the broad avenue leading to St. Peter's, the Vatican has erected a dormitory to accommodate 900 pilgrims and has restored the Palace of the Knights of St. Sepulchre to make room for 250 additional beds.

Together with three palaces furnished by the Italian government, and the facilities of convents and monasteries and the space leased in private dwellings, the Vatican will be prepared to provide accommodations for at least 22,000 visitors a day at a cost of about 800 lire—or $1.30—per pilgrim.

The church is also sprucing up its many sacred buildings and monuments so that they will look their best on this special occasion, and the Rome municipal government is chipping in with 7,000,000 lire to brighten the face of the teeming, splotchy city. New street lights will be installed, the railroad station is being expanded, dozens of streets have been repaved.

The Pope, in whom is vested the power to grant the indulgence the pilgrims will obtain, proclaimed the coming jubilee last May 26th in the bull *Jubilaeum Maximum*. As outlined in the message, the purpose of this holy year will be to foster a "general return to Christ"; to inspire "an inflexible spirit and energetic will in the defense of the church," a phrase pointedly beamed at the faithful of eastern Europe; to ask divine help for the conversion of non-Catholics; and to appeal for peace "founded on a just settlement" throughout the world and especially in Palestine (where the church is striving to secure the internationalization of Jerusalem).

Finally, as a reminder to Catholics who might be coming to Rome mainly to see the sights, the Pope added that this pilgrimage "must not be undertaken after the fashion of pleasure-seeking tourists, but in that spirit of earnest piety."

American pilgrims, heeding the spirit of the papal bull, should not expect luxurious suites. The accommodations are mostly adequate and comfortable—not opulent. Americans will not be cast adrift aimlessly in the city, quite an advantage when all facilities will be taxed to the utmost.

Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York told us that travel agencies will handle arrangements for the pilgrimages from the United States. Hotels and pensions, the cardinal said, have already been reserved to house these pilgrims. An American Catholic, planning to make the trip, would appear to be better off joining a pilgrimage from a diocese.

For the holy year trip, the average American pilgrim should count on spending between $500 and $600 for a round-trip airplane ticket; $50 to $100 less for the transatlantic crossing and return by ship. He should plan to spend a minimum of $50 for a week's stay to cover all other expenses.

The hotels will be checked regularly by the holy year committee to see that there are no rent-gouging practices. Pilgrims also will get a break in local transportation. The city government is turning itself inside out to provide plenty of busses and trolleys so that the pilgrims can get around cheaply.

The air lines will be an important transportation factor for the first time in a holy year celebration. Five times as many pilgrims and visitors will be carried by air from the United States to Rome as the *total* who flocked here by ship during the jubilee of 1933. Chartered planes will bring pilgrims on their first visit to Rome from such far-flung places as New Caledonia.

The writers who collaborated on this article, William Attwood and Seymour Freidin, belong to a three-man reporting team now covering Europe on assignment from Collier's. (David Perlman is the other.) Attwood, born in Paris 30 years ago, is a Princeton graduate and a former New York Herald Tribune European correspondent. Freidin, 32 years old, was for three years the Herald Tribune's chief correspondent in eastern Europe and in the Balkans

Compare conditions today with the pitfalls encountered in the first few hundred years of the pilgrimages. Then, devout men and women, many of them barefoot, trudged along the highways, begging food and seeking shelter at infrequent hospices. They had to fend off gangs of freebooters. Hostile cities tried to exact tribute from them and they were dogged by plagues.

The intensity of the crowds converging on the basilica often drove them completely out of control. In 1450, the year that the plague was at its deadliest, a huge crowd thronged the Bridge St. Angelo and made passage impossible as pilgrims sought to cross in opposite directions at the same time. The crowd was so vast that within a few hours 172 persons were crushed to death.

While these perils no longer exist, the lure of easy pickings has persisted from the beginning. All the Italian national and local security agencies have been alerted to keep out the swarms drawn to Rome in the hope of fleecing guileless pilgrims. They have come from all over the world, some with ingenious schemes, others with the old con games, such as offering for sale a piece of the True Cross.

The police have already launched the biggest cleanup campaign in modern Italian history. Most of the concentration is on Rome, but the *carabinieri* are also keeping an eye on known operators who are cautiously staying in the provinces until the crowds reach Rome.

The Vatican has also evicted all purveyors of medals and of photographs of Holy Places from their old stands around St. Peter's Square. The chances are that these peddlers will congregate around the hotels where Americans stay. The committee points out, if anyone offers for sale a medal blessed by the Pope, pilgrims should remember that the spiritual quality of the medal is lost once money passes hands.

The cleanup campaign has also struck art exhibits. Posters displaying Botticelli's Venus as an advertisement for a Renaissance exhibition have been carefully removed from public places around the city. Magazines with too much leg art and featuring pretty girls in scanty bathing suits are disappearing from the newsstands.

Rome's Mayor Salvatore Rebecchini told us that his administration will do everything within its power to make the city a proper place spiritually for pilgrims. "We are conducting a general morality drive," he said. "We are certain that it will be entirely successful."

Police zealousness sometimes causes embarrassing incidents. The informality of American women's dress has been frowned on in Rome and some new and overcautious cops have tried to arrest tourists whose garments they thought overstepped propriety.

Long sleeves and high-necked dresses will be the rule for women making the pilgrimage. That also eliminates any chance of being approached by glib peddlers who explain that, before entering any of the basilicas, ladies *must* rent long, black alpaca coats at sizable rates.

Although the passage of 650 years has induced sweeping changes in the habits and demands of the crowds coming to Rome, time has little altered the solemn ritual to which the faithful are primarily attracted. They will go, as have their early predecessors, to the four "basilicas"—the canonical title for certain privileged churches.

There is no order of preference as to which should be visited first. At each altar of confession, pilgrims will recite three times the prayers: Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be to the Father. A fourth time these prayers will be said for the intentions of the Holy Father, followed by the Creed.

Besides rededicating themselves to their faith, pilgrims will see some of the most notable architecture in Europe as they visit the basilicas. When they go to pray at St. Peter's, they will be beneath the Cupola of Michelangelo. At St. Paul's they will have an opportunity to see the quadrangular portico of 146 columns, 10 of them in red granite and facing the historic river Tiber.

The pilgrims will find in St. John Lateran one of the finest examples of baroque architecture. Originally constructed by the Roman Emperor Constantine, the basilica underwent an almost complete renovation in the sixteenth century.

Legend of a Famous Church

The basilica of St. Mary Major, according to Catholic tradition, was built after the Virgin Mary appeared to Pope Liberius the night of August 5, 352, and requested that a church be built on the site where snow would be seen the next morning. The Esquiline Hill was found capped with snow the following day and the basilica was erected on the spot.

Throughout the year the passage of the pilgrims from one basilica to another will be an almost endless procession, striking in its evidence of devotion. Most of the devout will tell the beads of their rosaries or softly intone prayers as they walk. When they have finished their prayers at each basilica they will go to confession and take Communion. At that point the great plenary indulgence takes effect.

During the holy year the practice of permitting pilgrims to file in long columns to kiss the papal ring will be omitted. In 1925, when the ceremony was still observed, Pope Pius XI received long queues of pilgrims from early morning until nearly midnight every day, a staggering physical ordeal. This jubilee, Pius XII will celebrate Mass at St. Peter's about twice a week and pilgrims may attend. On Sundays the Pope will also be present at beatifications as well as at the canonizations of three Italian and two French saints.

In this way, every pilgrim who visits Rome in 1950 will have an opportunity to see the Holy Father and to receive his personal blessing. This was confirmed to us by the Pope himself during an audience at his summer residence at Castel Gandolfo.

Pilgrims will also be able to visit the grottoes beneath St. Peter's which will be open to the public for the first time since the completion recently of 10 years of painstaking research and excavation. It is believed that the bones of St. Peter have been found there in an old pagan cemetery. Giuseppe Nicolosi, one of the directors of the excavations, told us that the cemetery is next to Nero's Circus, where St. Peter was crucified. Vatican officials have indicated, in reply to our questions, that the announcement of the discovery of St. Peter's bones will be made officially during 1950.

Controversy Over a Dogma

This holy year may also be marked by the pronouncement of a new dogma, one of the most arresting events of the jubilee and certainly one of the most important enunciations of Catholic doctrine in our time. The dogma will assert that Mary, Mother of Jesus, is in heaven, not only in spirit but also in body. The dogma has been under study and discussion since 1869 in the Vatican, where some church leaders opposed it as tending to widen the gulf between Catholicism and other Christian denominations.

As a consequence of the Vatican struggle against Communism, holy year may also see one of the most drastic reforms since the Council of Trent, 400 years ago. To make members of cloistered monastic orders more effective instruments in this struggle, they may be allowed to depart from their sequestered routines and go on missions throughout the world. Last spring the Pope told Franciscans that they "must mix their sweat" with that of workers in factories, patients and employees in hospitals, inmates and jailers in prisons.

This reform which would affect some 150,000 members of the cloistered orders, including 10,000 in the United States, may begin in Italy with 200 Benedictine monasteries. It would soften the asceticism of life in the orders and enable monks and nuns—even those such as Trappists, among whom conversation is prohibited—to move about in secular surroundings.

To strengthen further the proposed changes, isolated cloisters may be federated so as to be able to exchange personnel and combine their forces in the educational campaign against materialism.

Last May, the Pope underscored the importance to the Vatican of a tremendous turnout of pilgrims with an urgent plea to the faithful of all lands.

"If such strenuous efforts can be made to overcome difficulties of every sort when there is question of the interests of this earthly life," he said, "why shall the hope not be cherished that an immense multitude from every corner of the world, sparing no exertion and daunted by no inconvenience, may flock to this beloved city in quest of the riches of heaven?"

A year from now, when the mortar and the bricks are placed outside St. Peter's portico for the walling up of the Holy Door, and the Pope, a white apron around his waist, kneels to lay the first brick and close another holy year, the world will know to what extent Catholics have responded to his appeal in this critical hour of their church's history. THE END

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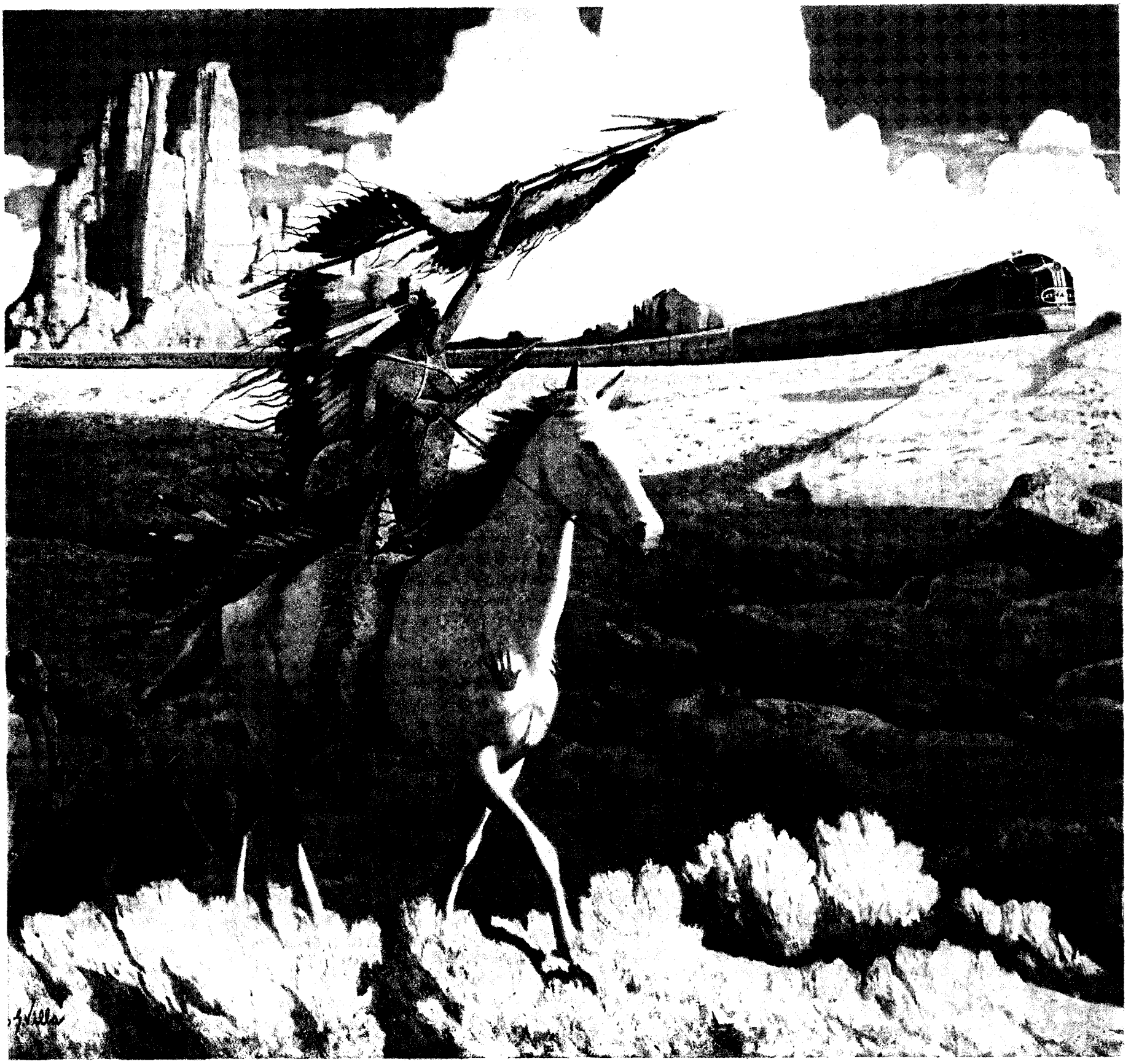

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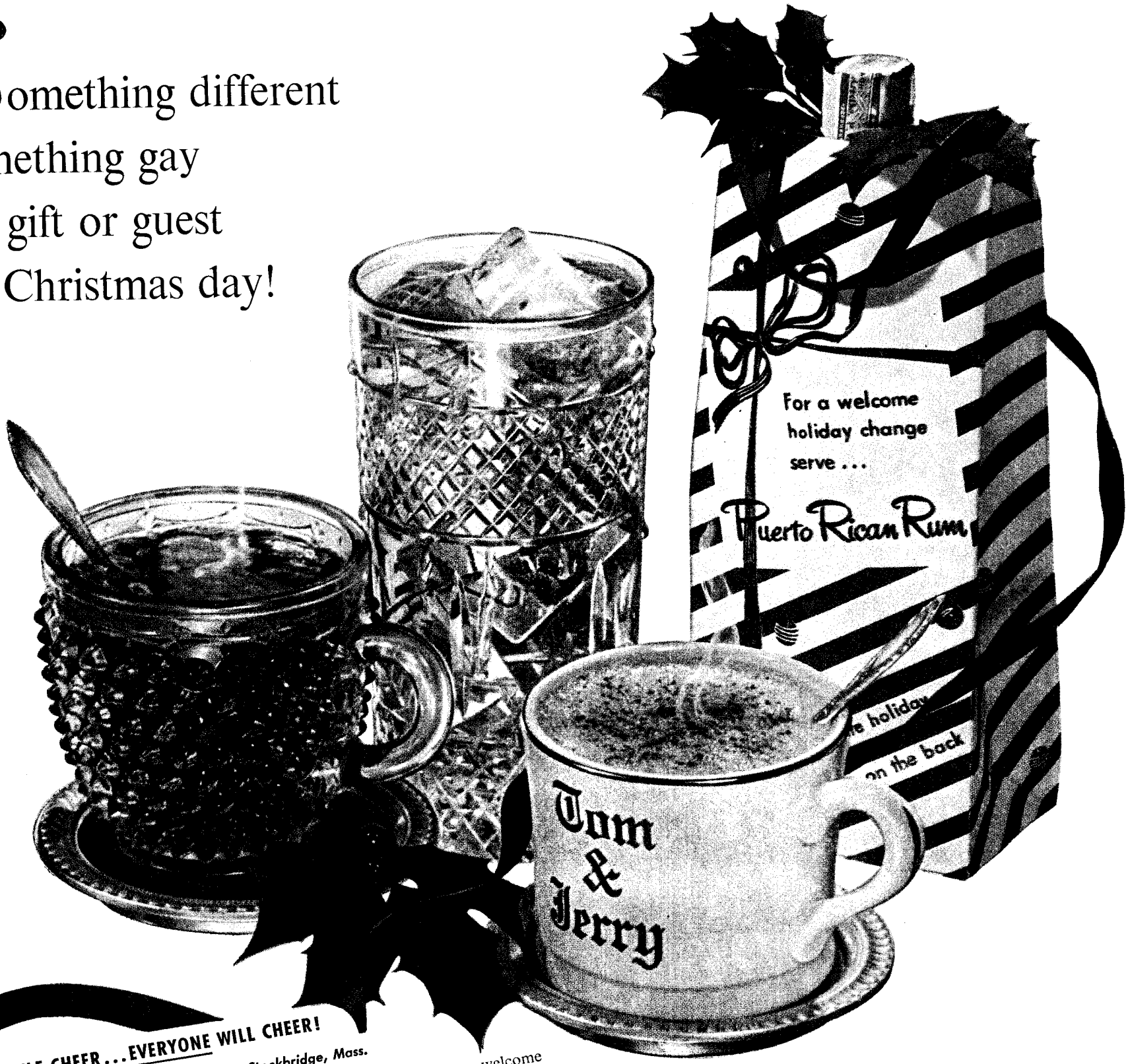
Something different
something gay
for gift or guest
on Christmas day!



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As served at the Christmas Tree Inn, Stockbridge, Mass.

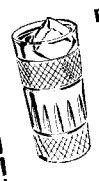
For present-giving or party-giving, Puerto Rican rum makes a welcome holiday change! A traditional Christmas drink since colonial days . . . it's the happiest holiday drink today! Why not send it as a gift in the distinctive gay gift package above. Or serve it to guests and hear them cheer its satisfying light, dry, *smoothness!* Ask for America's most popular rum today, Puerto Rican rum . . . and sip the merriest Christmas of them all!

HOT BUTTERED RUM

1 jigger golden
Puerto Rican rum
Lump of sugar
Small chip butter
4 cloves

Fill with boiling water and stir. As Christmasy as holly . . . as smart and smooth and mellow as Puerto Rican rum itself.

RUM HIGHBALL



1 jigger golden
Puerto Rican rum
(So Smo-o-th!)
Add ice, soda,
ginger ale or water

You'll never know how really light and smooth a highball can be until you try one made with Puerto Rican rum.

TOM & JERRY

Beat white and yolk
of 1 egg separately
Blend. Add tsp. sugar
Stir and pour in
1 jigger
Puerto Rican rum

Top with hot milk or boiling water. Sprinkle with nutmeg. A Tom and Jerry that's distinctive, smart and so satisfying!

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—these words on every bottle

Puerto Rican Rum

Light *and* Dry—*not heavy and sweet*

PUERTO RICO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, SAN JUAN, P. R.

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Cinderella Rides Again

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

ought to be spread around a lot more than they are."

His shyness had vanished, Bessie noticed; the lovely, deserted, peaceful lake echoed to the sound of his voice.

"But I want to know who's going to get what we redistribute. Not just me taking it out of my pocket and some guy that's been envying me putting it in his.

"One thing I know. Whatever a man's going to try to do, he's got to do it *inside* politics. We've got a lot of government now, some of it looks like it's *of* and *for* but whether it's *by* the people, I'm not sure. That's why I've got to take a crack at politics, *party* politics. Parties, Sonny always said, eat their young if you don't watch them."

At the word politics, Bessie had stopped listening. Her eyes were wide and bright, but her ears were closed and her mind was elsewhere. She was pondering on the amazing fact that this was Cyrus Sayre Falkland's idea of a good time. It was not what Merry Weather In Society had led Bessie Keegan to expect. Something would have to be done about it.

If she stayed at this dreary lodge now, without complaining, she'd soon be able to twist him around her little finger, the way a wife should. She realized that this was the place in which to work her spell, day and night. If she put her mind to it and kept cool, she could do it. Of course it would be lonesome, but by the time she could persuade him to take her to Paris, he'd be so much in love with her he'd never say no to her again.

It didn't turn out to be as lonesome as all that.

At the end of the third day, the press caught up with them.

About one thing Bessie was right. It was quite a long time before her husband said no to her again.

FROM Dower House, Maryland, Mrs. Antoinette Falkland followed the newspaper accounts of Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Sayre Falkland's honeymoon tour of Europe. She read them uneasily, with a mounting dislike for what seemed to her a noisiness, an ostentation, something very like a vulgarity about the tour and the fanfare it received. It was all so unlike Cyrus. His first plan had been to spend a quiet few weeks at the lodge and then return to town. Mrs. Falkland learned about the change of plan in a hasty letter, scribbled at the airport before Cyrus and Bessie took off for Europe.

In the late fall, after reluctantly closing Dower House for the season, she returned to the mansion on Fifth Avenue to await the return of her son and daughter-in-law, who would take up residence with her there. Very soon now, Bessie Falkland, nee Keegan, would have to be introduced to the responsibilities of her new position. And the dowager Mrs. Falkland wondered more and more whether she was equipped to meet them.

IN SPITE of the doctor's orders, Mrs. Falkland was working very hard on the administration of her many philanthropies. She met often with her famed Kitchen Cabinet of women from all walks of life who advised her on everything from labor relations in the Falkland factories to problems connected with the endowment of schools. A new project, dear to Mrs. Falkland's heart, was in the making: the preliminary steps had already been taken to establish a women's college of economics and political science.

In all of this, young Bessie Falkland would shortly be expected to take an active and interested part. And yet, judging from Cyrus' letters, her interests seemed to lie in other directions. With humorous indulgence, Cyrus described Bessie's delight in her first Paris frocks, in the jewels bought in Amsterdam, the shining black foreign car in which they toured the British Isles, the yacht rented for a cruise in the Mediterranean.

"It's a joy to give her things," Cyrus wrote, and Mrs. Antoinette Falkland wondered. Two other people were doing some wondering about Bessie also. One was John V. Merryweather, to whose society page on the Chronicle the honeymoon tour was manna from heaven. Always before, Cyrus had been shy of having pictures taken; but on this trip, somehow, the young Falklands were photographed in every possible pose and activity consistent with decency.

COLLIER'S "Our slip covers are all at the laundry" JERRY MARCUS

COLLIER'S "No, there wasn't any mistletoe, but he doesn't seem to be a stickler for convention" MARY GIBSON

Merryweather had guessed it would be like that. When his own photographer returned from the lodge, whose privacy the press had invaded quite easily, Merryweather had chuckled and said, "You'd never guess she was a hairdresser from Tuckapack, would you? She looks like any dame you'd see coming out of an expensive shop on Park Avenue." But then his eyes grew solemn when he saw the smile of adoration on young Cyrus' face. This was plainly an infatuated young man.

Later, Merryweather went over to Tuckapack to visit Papa Keegan, who had been wondering on his own account.

"She's sure riding high," Merryweather said, sitting on a broken chair in the tool shed and watching Papa polish a piece of apple-green jade.

"Turn any girl's head," Papa said. "You done your part in it—with all that Cinderella baloney you write."

Merryweather stirred defensively. "Seems to me the spoiling of Bessie started long before that," he said.

Papa's faded eyes met Merryweather's squarely. "I brought her up the best I knew how," he said. "After Mother went, it wasn't easy. The other kids needed a lot too. I had a soft spot for Bessie—sure. She knew it and the others knew it. But I never let her run wild and I taught her to do right. *I* didn't want her to marry a millionaire, as you well know. Better is a little with fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. But she done it—and he's a nice young feller and means well."

Merryweather snorted. "Meaning well is hardly ever enough. Cy is handing Delilah the shears and looking too damn' cheerful about it to suit me. You can see it in every one of those silly pictures."

Papa bent his head over his workbench. "I know," he said. "It's a shame. But I'm kind of counting on Cyrus. He might be able to learn her that there's more important things than dresses and coats and trips to Europe."

"It'll take a miracle," Merryweather said.

"You got anything against miracles?" Papa asked.

"Kind of out of date, aren't they?"

"Not as long as the corn comes up in the spring," Papa said. "Not as long as the stars come out at night and stay where they were put."

Merryweather went back to New York, feeling better. He always felt better after a talk with Papa.

THE young Falklands finally arrived from Europe laden with boxes from Bessie's buying spree in the shops of London and Paris. When they were actually in residence on Fifth Avenue, Mrs. Antoinette Falkland's misgivings became greater than ever. For days after their return, trunks and boxes and crates kept arriving from all ports they had visited.

Cyrus seemed happy, often hilariously happy, in fact; but there was a mist between him and his mother. She thought of him as out of reach, even though they lived under the same roof. She hardly ever saw him, for he worked hard all day at politics or whatever his new interest was—Mrs. Falkland had never quite understood it. And Bessie's plans seemed to take care of all the evenings.

Once, gently, she said to Bessie, "Cyrus looks so tired." It was on one of the rare evenings when they were all three together, at dinner in the big hall.

Cyrus laughed. "There's so much work to do," he said. "You've no idea how fatiguing idealism can be."

"You call that work?" Bessie said. "Politics is so dull."

Antoinette Falkland was aware of a sort of swaggering gaiety, a challenge, in the way her daughter-in-law spread the extravagant skirts of the gown she was wearing—too lavish a gown really for a quiet evening at home. Bessie enjoyed living in the same house with the fabulous Mrs. Falkland, but she made it clear at all times that she was living her life on her own terms.

Woman of the world herself, Mrs. Falkland recognized the girl's strength, her cleverness, her elegance. If she could be turned in the right direction, Mrs. Falkland saw that Cyrus' wife might be one of the ablest women of her time in whatever the difficult and precarious future held. "You'll teach her, you'll train her, you'll show her the way," Cyrus had said on the day he came to tell his mother about Bessie Keegan. Now Mrs. Falkland did not see her own way; she had a sense of wrestling with unseen powers stronger than she was, of beating her head against a smooth, impregnable wall. Of one

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thing she was sure: The girl did not love Cyrus. Perhaps she was incapable of loving anyone but herself. His mother could not make a move against her without hitting Cyrus, and yet this greedy little interloper might destroy all his dreams.

"Our Mr. Merryweather," Antoinette Falkland said, "now refers to me as the dowager, and that's quite right. You are Mrs. Falkland now and—you can help me and I hope I can help you. I'm quite ready to hand over the keys." She smiled at her own use of the old-fashioned stilted phrase.

"Oh, I don't think I should be much good to you," Bessie said carelessly. "I'm not interested in that sort of thing."

"I am afraid you will have to be interested," Mrs. Falkland said. "You see, later you will have to do it all by yourself."

So Bessie agreed, with a polite if slightly bored deference, to attend the first winter meeting of Mrs. Falkland's famous Kitchen Cabinet.

"Though why she wants me," Bessie said to Cyrus as she stood before newly installed triple mirrors in their bedroom, "I can't imagine."

"If we could stay home and talk it over," Cy Falkland said hopefully, "I could explain it all to you. They're magnificent old gals, actually, and the job they do! Besides, I've got some reports to work on."

"My darling idiot," his wife said lightly, "have you forgotten this is the night of the Matthewsons' dinner for us?"

"I had indeed," Cy said, and then his face brightened. "Good to see the Moose."

His white tie fixed to his satisfaction, he came and stood behind her and saw repeated in the mirrors the exquisite little figure. He bent to kiss her.

"Be careful of my hair," Bessie said; but she turned and stood on tiptoe, holding up her lips.

ALL readers of Merry Weather In Society knew that the winter season for everybody who counted in New York would open officially with the exclusive dinner being given by Mr. and Mrs. Adam Farraday Matthewson in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Sayre Falkland.

On this important evening, Moose Matthewson was already in the drawing room when his wife came down the circular staircase at a little before eight thirty. He decided he had never seen her look more brilliant. On second look, she was too thin: the bones showed too plainly, and she was held together only by an electric current of some kind.

The strain between them had not lessened in all the months since that night at Zydercliff. In Moose was still that smoldering jealousy, for which he despised himself. Often in the night his imagination, rusty from long disuse, tormented him, though with the coming of the light he took himself in hand and refused the various dishonors it suggested. He raged at himself. If he wasn't going to do anything, he must quit thinking about it. But it would not let go.

"You know," Myra said, "this is very exciting. Imagine, darling, we're giving a dinner party for our Bessie—for the best lady's maid I ever had." She laughed a little feverishly, and Moose didn't answer. At that moment the butler, with a perfectly blank face, was announcing Mr. and Mrs. Falkland.

Already the fashion magazines had carried layouts of Mrs. Cyrus Sayre Falkland in her favorite shades of violet, of lilac, ivory, mignonette green, and silver gray, colors that had gone out with the bustle. The Falkland Cinderella, according to fashion editors, was bringing back the ultra-feminine—the wasp waist, priceless laces, yards of train, bare breast for jewels.

Tonight young Mrs. Falkland had chosen to wear a formal gown of the palest green ever seen—and with it she wore the Falkland emeralds.

Moose Matthewson moved forward. He said, "It's pleasant to see you here, Mrs. Falkland."

Bessie inclined her head with a gesture she had copied from the real Mrs. Falkland and said, "Thank you. It's kind of you and Myra to do this for me."

A perfect tableau, easy, charming. Then it broke into pieces like a cutout puzzle. The men went across the hall to the lounge for a drink, talking politics already; the ladies were left alone.

"I suppose," Myra said bluntly, "you and I will always hate each other's guts—"

Plainly, this kind of talk made young Mrs. Falkland's fragrant, white flesh creep, or she pretended it did, even to herself. "Oh, no," she said, "that would be so foolish."

"All right," Myra Matthewson said. "I'm no fool. Let's face it, in some ways I can still make things easy for you—or tough."

"You wouldn't do that," young Mrs. Falkland said.

"No, probably not," Myra Matthewson said; her voice had grown husky. "You're in now. But—before anybody else comes, where is that letter? It's driving me crazy. Moose doesn't believe I helped you get to Zydercliff as a joke. He has an idea you had something on me and he keeps worrying it like a bulldog with a bone. Anyhow, that letter's plain hell, especially now that it smells like a dead horse."

"Do you know," Bessie said, wide-eyed, "I'd forgotten all about it?"

"I hadn't," Myra Matthewson said grimly. "If it's still around, will you burn it and let me know when it's burned so I can get some sleep?"

"Of course I will," Bessie Falkland said in a warm, frank voice. "I'm sorry it's been such a bore. It's in a perfectly safe place."

Bessie believed it. Where in the world could it be safer than in Jake Fuceli's garage? Who in the world would ever think to look for it there?

As the distinguished guests began to arrive and were presented to Mrs. Cyrus Sayre Falkland, she thought fleetingly that the next time she went to Tuckapack to see Papa she must remember to get it. She went to Tuckapack every week, because Cyrus insisted; Cyrus was crazy about Papa.

Myra was probably right. It was a good idea to burn the letter. It certainly couldn't do her any good, either.

Then Moose was offering her his arm, and she forgot all about it again. In the triumph of the winter season's brilliant opening, she didn't give it another thought.

THE walls of the room in which the Kitchen Cabinet meetings were held were paneled in dark, red-brocaded satin, inset with other panels of carved wood. From the painted ceiling where gods and goddesses disported hung a magnificent chandelier and on the Italian marble mantel at the north end was an ormolu clock and at the other a painting by Turner. A great table stood in the middle, adding to the clutter; but by the standards of the nineties, it was a handsome room.

When young Mrs. Falkland entered it, eleven minutes after the appointed hour of ten o'clock, there were already four women seated in the great tapestried chairs; as soon as they saw her they abruptly stopped.

Everybody was curious about the working girl who had become Cyrus Sayre Falkland's bride, but these women had a personal interest. Behind their curiosity lay a burning interest in what this girl was going to mean to them and their work.

Their eyes sharpened, brightened—all but those of a little old woman who simply looked at the new Mrs. Falkland as she might have looked at any other young woman, to see what she was made of. Rats and snails and puppy dogs' tails, Bessie wanted to say, and make a face to go with it. The old woman's eyes were by no means unfriendly, yet Bessie heard the lower levels of her mind jeering: Go ahead, get an eyeful. Anything wrong with me? My slip showing or something?

Her slip wasn't showing, of course. She was dressed as she always dressed these days: with quiet elegance and perhaps a touch of daring.

I knocked their eyes out, Bessie thought sulkily, without satisfaction. After all, they're only Falkland hired help. They bet-

BOB GUNTHORPE

Merry Christmas to Everybody

MY WIFE, Jewell, and I have been thinking about how nice people have been to us. We have a sort of feeling that everybody in the United States wishes us well, and we want to show our appreciation by wishing all of you a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and a lot of them.

Maybe you think a man in my condition, with both arms and both legs gone—I stepped on a Japanese mine on Okinawa in June, 1945—would not be in the mood to be sending Christmas cheer to the rest of you. But I am. Since setting off that mine, I have made the big discovery that a man makes up his own life inside his mind and his heart. It is not entirely or even mainly a matter of legs and arms. It is thoughts and attitudes and plans for the future.

We don't look backward much in my family. We look forward, and plan. We have so much to do, I don't know when we'll catch up. Never, probably, and I'm glad of that.

A man who doesn't have anything to do is in bad shape, and if he can't find anything he can do, he's in worse shape. I never have been like that. It is easy for me to keep busy. Every day I have a lot of things to attend to. Not just time-killing things, either. I get up early and supervise the work on our 143-acre dairy farm 16 miles outside of Birmingham, Alabama. We bought it with money that was raised for us by warmhearted folks who had read about me.

A lot of special equipment has been installed for me, such as ramps and elevators. I can get around pretty well in my wheel chair in the house, and outside I can drive my own jeep. It is specially equipped, of course, so that I can handle it. But I can also drive the truck and the tractor, when it is necessary or when I want to.

Like any other farmer who has a place bigger than he can take care of by himself, I hire helpers; and like any other farmer who attends to all the management himself, I have plenty to do and then some.

Between chores at the farm or around the house I like to hunt and fish, especially fish. And I like to read and go to the movies.

My health has been improving these past two or three years, and my appetite has too. I feel good, and laugh about as often as any of you. It is enough to make a man feel good to live among kind people, look out over his own yard and his own farm, direct his own living, and see his plans developing.

People ask me, when did I win the great victory over my wounds? I did not have to win any great victory. I never gave up. There never was a time when I thought of myself as living a dark life, doing nothing. But if it were not for Jewell—we were married in August, 1942, before I went to the Pacific, and had known each other a long time before that while we both lived in Kentucky—I guess I would have had to spend a lot more time in a veterans' hospital somewhere. Any man needs a good wife to live a normal life, and I have the best of wives.

There are not many important things that have to be done that I can't do. I can write, of course, and my writing is as plain and neat now as it was before I had to use artificial arms and aids. My signature looks as it always has. A man's mind does the writing anyway. His muscles obey his mind. I had to learn to use new muscles, and it was not always easy. But it can be done, and that's the important fact. I want to do whatever it is possible for me to do, and naturally I get satisfaction out of learning.

Maybe I see human nature at its best. I don't know. But I do know that all the people I meet are kind and want to be helpful. We have a lot of friends we never have seen, but they write to us often, and have for years. We answer all the letters we can. It means a lot to have correspondence friends too, who stick to you through the years.

All of this, and a lot more that I have not said, is why we want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas.

Fredric Hensel

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ter quit staring at me like I was in an aquarium or I'll fire the whole bunch.

Mrs. Falkland swept in, followed by Miss Sawyer carrying papers. To Bessie she said in a warm, intimate voice, "I thought you'd stop by my room. I waited." To the others she said, "I'm sorry to be late on this happy —and important—day."

Very kindly, she named them to Bessie. Even more kindly, she presented her new daughter-in-law to them. "Our new vice-president," she said with a ring in the crystal voice, and there was a babble of congratulations.

BESSIE smiled and smiled until her face felt stiff. Behind the smile she was saying to herself: "Vice-president! What kind of kids' game is this these dames are playing?" If they knew how ridiculous they looked, Bessie thought—sitting around like pelicans.

Only her mother-in-law didn't look ridiculous. She looked so much like the fabulous Mrs. Falkland it wouldn't have mattered if she'd worn a porkpie hat like Queen Victoria, in some of her pictures. To the manner born. Did you have to be? No, I can do it, Bessie thought. I can. Only she knew now from the moment they sat down she had been conscious to the marrow of her bones of the way these efficient, independent, successful women looked at Antoinette Falkland. "Buttering her up," Bessie told herself; out for what they could get, like everybody else. They probably expected to be remembered in Mrs. Falkland's will.

The cabinet—and that was a joke, too—didn't ignore its new vice-president. They simply forgot she was there. Bessie Falkland stopped listening. She shut her ears to all the silly talk about hospitals and school kitchens for children, and housing problems in the new Western plants, and all the rest of it.

Bessie forced herself to think of the Twombleys' ball next week for their debutante daughter, and the fact that in an hour she would be lunching at a midtown restaurant with Germaine Landis and her haughty mother. *(You have to, Mama. I can't let people think I mind because Cyrus married her. I've got some pride.)*

But all the time something deep inside Bessie kept taking it all in.

This new endowment for economic education which Mrs. Falkland hoped would mean so much to the women inside the Falkland industrial empire. *Education is the great weapon always.* An endowment of millions and millions of dollars.

Bessie felt that she was suffocating. It ought not to be allowed! There were laws to keep people from doing things like that, crazy things, with their money. It wasn't *hers* anyhow; it was Cy's—and Bessie's really. Rage roared in her ears, and she heard no more until she caught Cyrus' name.

"And is Mr. Cyrus really going into politics?" one of the women was saying. "You have no idea how excited everybody in Washington is over *that* rumor."

Everything was perfectly still in the handsome room, so that the sound of a foghorn on the Hudson could be plainly heard.

Antoinette Falkland said, "Elizabeth may know more of that than I do."

"Me?" Bessie said.

They were all looking at her, and Bessie kept smiling, but now it was a white flag over an empty citadel. In spite of her rage, she wished she hadn't worn her hat, whose purpose was to show that she was on her way somewhere else in a hurry. She wished she had dressed more plainly; nothing was worse than being overdressed. She wished she'd been polite and —and listened.

"She's his bride," Antoinette Falkland said, laying a hand on Bessie's arm. "I can't remember that Fergus and I talked politics on our honeymoon."

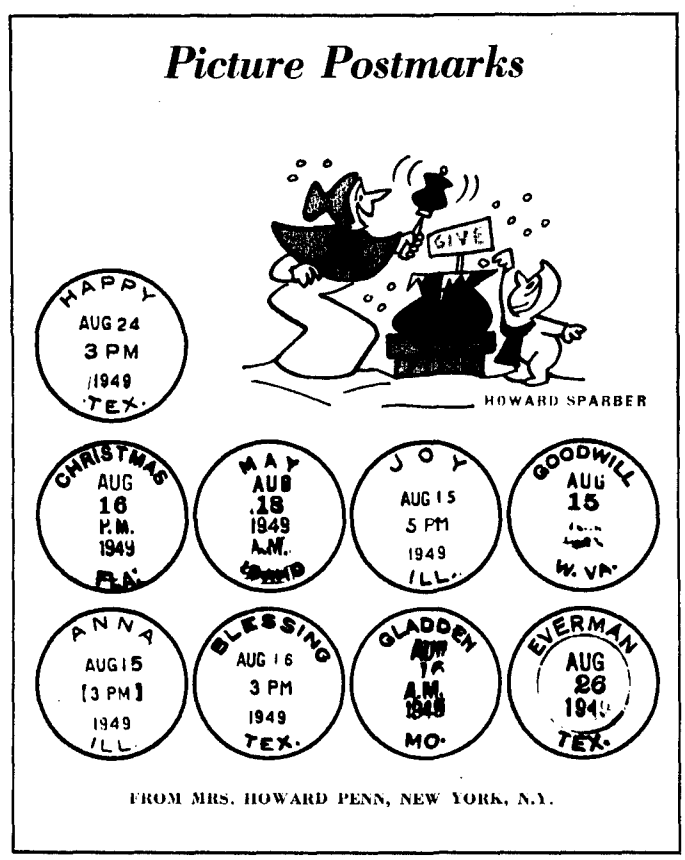
Young Mrs. Falkland stood up. She was very white. She said, "We do talk about politics—there are a few things I can talk about. But my husband isn't going into politics, because it's a dirty game and why should he and I don't want him to."

"I think I agree with you there," Antoinette Falkland said.

I don't care whether you agree with me or not, you or any of the rest of these old do-gooders, Bessie said in her hot heart. I don't care one way or the other. Aloud she said, "I'm sorry, I've a luncheon engagement."

"Run along," Mrs. Falkland said. "Next time, I'll give you more notice."

"Don't bother," said young Mrs. Falkland.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FROM MRS. HOWARD PENN, NEW YORK, N.Y.

So far as she was concerned, there wasn't going to be any next time.

THE diamond tiara, which had once adorned the head of the Empress Josephine, brought the whole thing into the open.

Young Mrs. Cyrus Sayre Falkland saw it for the first time as she stepped from her luxurious car to go for a fitting. It stood alone in the golden frame of a jeweler's window, a dream of rose and white fire against a black velvet drape. The small black card below bore in golden letters its glamorous legend. The Empress Josephine had been Bessie Keegan's favorite historical character ever since she discovered that the exquisite empress of the French had started life as a poor little Creole girl in a town no more important socially at the time than Tuckapack, New Jersey. Josephine, like Bessie, had married well.

In one irresistible flash, the diamond crown became to her the literal and figurative symbol of her own conquest. She would show them all. Cyrus' mother and all those stuffy women and everybody would know Cy Falkland had bought his bride the Empress Josephine's tiara. Probably Merryweather would write a column about it.

So far, she had lived up to her determination to twist her loving husband around her little finger.

She told him about the tiara that same night, in the drawing room of their third-floor suite in the Falkland mansion. And at that minute, the real business of their lives began, though neither of them realized it. He merely shook his head when Bessie asked him to buy the tiara.

"But why not?" Bessie said.

"For one thing," Cyrus said, "it costs too much money."

Those were words Bessie had never expected to hear again. In an earlier incarnation, everything she wanted had cost too much money. It couldn't be the same, now that she was sitting on top of the glittering pile of Falkland gold. She wanted those diamonds worse than she had ever wanted anything, even a red balloon in a toy store in Trenton when she was four. "How much, for goodness sake?" she said.

"My precious wife," Cy said gently, "you put that pretty piece of crystallized carbon on your lovely head when there are thousands of children starving and women saving pennies to buy Junior's winter coat and it will annoy a hell of a lot of people. Some women could. But you—a Falkland—it would be equivalent to let 'em eat cake."

"Do you think any of them wouldn't take it if they could get it?" Bessie said. "I don't know who Josephine got it from—Marie Antoinette probably. But she got it, and somebody always does."

They stared at each other, numb with shock. As the numbness wore off, they were driven to examine, to explain, to justify themselves to each other. Neither of them gave one thought to possible defeat or compromise.

Four terrible hours later, when the great city had grown empty and dark and still around them, each of them was beginning to understand. The amazing marriage of Cyrus Sayre Falkland and Bessie Keegan emerged for the first time before the two most nearly concerned, stripped of passion or romance, of affection and tenderness, of everything—especially illusion.

"But I thought—" Cy kept saying.

"You thought!" Bessie said bitterly. "You *said*—"

Each of them, they saw now, had expected certain things from the other; each had looked for a way of life and was certain it had been found in this marriage.

Bessie Keegan had married Cyrus Sayre Falkland not merely for his money, but because he could give her that life of dazzle and splendor and power and ease and idleness and luxury and possessions—the life Germaine Landis and Rosalie Vanderhoff had set before her on that day so long ago in the Rosebud Beauty Salon. Of that life she had known nothing else.

"But—I *never* cared about that drivel," Cy Falkland said loudly. "My mother and I—we'd given it all up after Sonny died."

"How was I supposed to know that?" Bessie cried at him.

Cyrus Sayre Falkland had married Bessie Keegan because he was in love with her, first of all. But part of the love arose from the fact that she was a working girl, from a world he wanted to understand, whose respect and confidence he wanted to gain. He had chosen Bessie Keegan as his partner because he hoped he could break down the dangerous tensions between his world of wealth and power and her world of privation.

"I've been fighting to get out of there since I was six," Bessie said.

With a lopsided smile, Cy said, "How was *I* supposed to know *that?*"

"Anybody with brains ought to know anybody'd want to," Bessie said.

"I thought," Cy said, "we could work together in unity, for a better understanding between all kinds of people and—"

"Those dopes!" Bessie said.

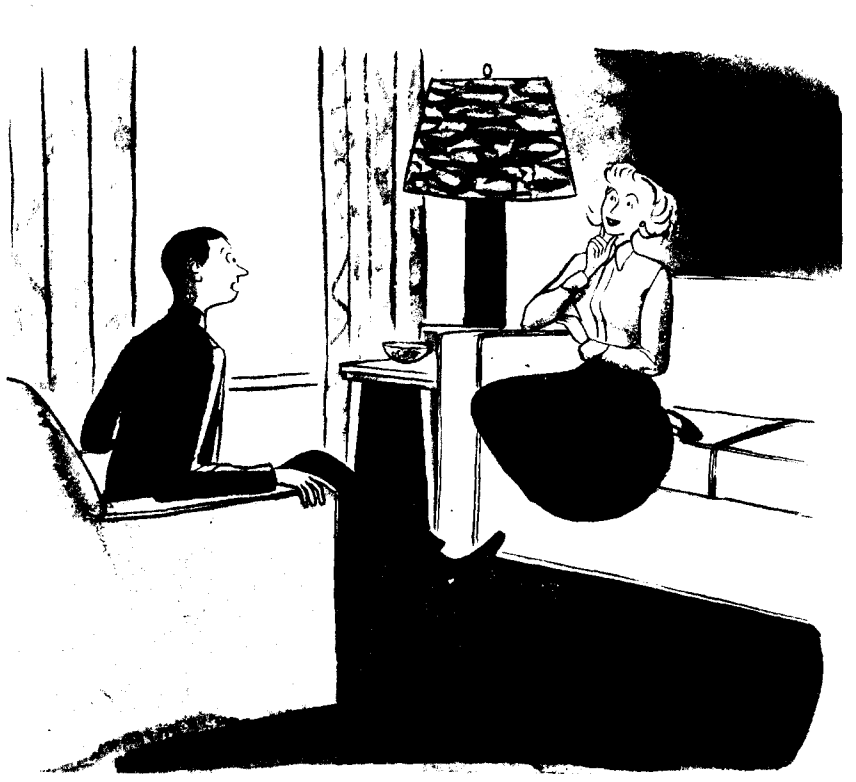
CY FALKLAND'S principles had been forged steel-bright and hard by his conscience, nagging him for neglecting them so long. Embarrassment and humility held him tongue-tied, until at last he forced himself to say, "My love, those people—*your* people, the ones who haven't had a chance—they're entitled to a chance at the good things of life. And they can get them too, if we all go slow. People will take responsibility if—"

"People!" Bessie said. "I know 'em. I was born and bred with them. They're pigs fighting to get into the trough. Dog eat dog to see who gets the biggest bone. Don't let anybody fool you about that."

"I don't believe it," Cyrus said.

Bessie began prowling the grand spaces of the drawing room. "It's easy for you to start giving money away. You've always had it. What about me? Looks to me like the closer people get together the more they hate and fear each other."

"No," Cy said. "No. That can't be true. That's why you and I, who love each other, have to prove it can be done. If *we* can't—"



COLLIER'S "Slips, stockings, undies . . . isn't there anything you want I can buy in a hardware store?" CHARLES PEARSON

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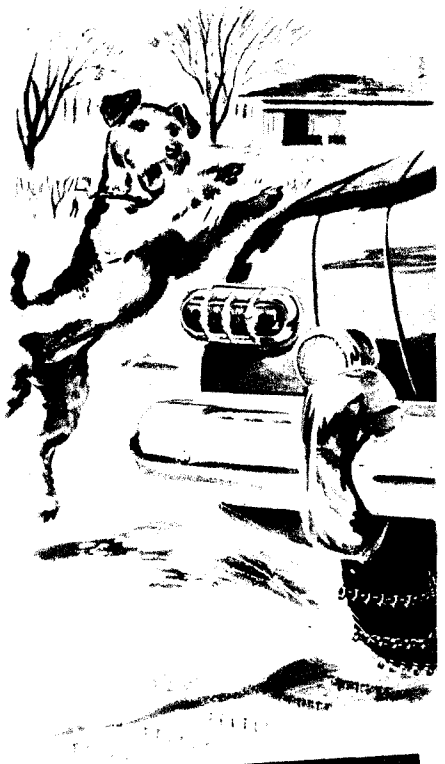
weather's *FRISKY*

roads are *RISKY*



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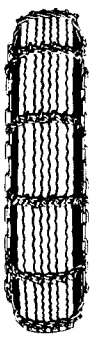

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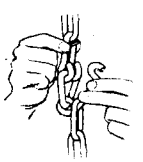

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"If it wasn't on me," Bessie said, "I'd think this was a hell of a good joke. Me marrying you for the kind of life I've always wanted and the money to buy things, just about the time you've decided to give it all up and be a reformer or a politician or some damn' silly crazy thing!"

Cy Falkland was silent. He was in love with Bessie. If it weren't for that, everything would have been so simple. Anger was hot in him now—a soul-sickening disappointment, and yet he saw that the fault was more his than hers.

He said humbly, "You're my wife, but of course you're a person in your own right, too. I couldn't ever play the heavy husband. I made up my mind to that before I married you. Only—that day at the lodge, I thought I made you understand what I believed in. I thought you understood."

She stared at him. She remembered. The shy confession of his personal and political faith, the hopes of a great career of service that had grown in him since Sonny's death —of reform leadership inside party politics, of honest platforms and open policies, honestly and openly arrived at. Of course she remembered. But surely that hadn't meant anything! People talked like that.

"Come and help me," Cy said urgently. "It will be hard work—I know that. I don't know yet exactly where I'm going myself. But wherever it is, I'll need you. I—I believe too many good people have chosen to ignore politics—and that's silly, because you can't get anything done without politics. I want you to help me."

"I don't want to," Bessie said. "I hate politics. I hate all the silly things you say you want to do."

"The times are changing," Cyrus said. "It'd be fun—"

"Fun?" The word screamed like a shell. "It wouldn't be fun. I see now why you sold Zydercliff. So who got it? That louse Harvey Ruggles. I see why you sold the yacht. So a lot of bums can leave banana peels and hot dogs all over the decks. Where does all that get anybody?"

He went to where she sat very stiff and upright, and tilted her head so he could see her face. He said, "We love each *other*—"

"What the hell has love got to do with it!" Bessie screamed at him.

FOR a long moment he looked straight down into her eyes. Then he turned swiftly and went out. Even when she heard the door close behind him, Bessie Falkland did not move; she sat blinking at the light in a stupor of fury and frustration.

This wasn't a quarrel. This was civil war.

She had not been dealing with a weak man, but with a man young and passionately in love. Perhaps she should have seen this all along.

The advantage was still in her hands. Even in her fury, she hadn't said she didn't love him, had she? It frightened her to think how close she had come to saying it. She held all the cards. If she played them right, she could still win.

When Cy Falkland came back at last, she was waiting for him in the hall. A little, white, trembling figure crouched on a straight chair, she put up her arms and clung to him; he picked her up and carried her upstairs.

In his arms, she sobbed and whispered herself into the peace of exhaustion. Never in the world before, it seemed to Cy Falkland, could there have been a creature so enchanting, so eager to make amends. Her little broken words murmured breathlessly in his ear, the gestures of passion, the clinging soft body, the sweet intimacies by which she shut out all the rest of the world and all thought as well—these things were irresistible to the man who loved her.

For he knew that he loved her. After she had gone to sleep, Cyrus lay listening to her troubled breathing. She slept like a child—but Cyrus knew that Bessie wasn't a child.

He didn't blame her. How could he? In his way, he had been as selfish, as blind to everything but what he wanted as she had. He knew everything about Bessie—except one thing. The only thing he didn't know was whether she loved him.

Upon that, it seemed to him, the future must rest. . . .

In the days that followed, Antoinette Falkland saw that behind the façade of their outer life a second life was going on, as though they were enemies, waiting, watching, moving in skirmishes.

She found her daughter-in-law in a reckless and dangerous mood. And Antoinette Falkland saw that this cold, hard, terrible young girl would defeat her, simply because she had no scruples. Antoinette Falkland lived by a code—but Bessie Keegan Falkland was an embodiment of a cruel, selfish will to get her own way.

Cyrus was very silent; there were new, deep lines in his face, and his mother knew that he was in this girl's greedy clutches. He was on his way to becoming what his great-grandfather had become: a ruthless, empty machine.

There must be someone—someone who could make Bessie see what she was doing to Cyrus. A light came into Antoinette Falkland's mind. There was only one person in the world that Bessie Keegan loved.

Mrs. Falkland rang the bell. Margaret Sawyer appeared. "Get me Tuckapack, please. I wish to speak to Mr. Keegan," Mrs. Falkland said.

MR. KEEGAN approached the house on Fifth Avenue a little nervously. Tuckapack wasn't but sixty-seven miles away, but he'd only been to New York twice —once to see Babe Ruth play in the Yankee Stadium, and once to march in a St. Patrick's Day parade. He certainly wasn't going to be overawed by Bessie, no matter what. But now the real Mrs. Falkland had sent for him to come and see her.

The cab drew up smoothly in front of a huge mansion. Papa climbed the steps and rang the bell. A servant let him in, and soon he was in the presence of the great Mrs. Falkland—the real one.

Papa sat down and passed painlessly into a coma from which he emerged to find himself showing her the jade pin, which he had *made for her. It was like the one he had* given Bessie.

"This is a museum piece," Mrs. Falkland was saying warmly.

Certainly Papa wouldn't have believed he could make Mrs. Falkland a present. But he did. She seemed to appreciate it a good deal more than Bessie had; Antoinette Falkland's eyes shone with pleasure as she pinned the jade on her breast.

"I need your help, Mr. Keegan," she said then. "My son loves your daughter—but do you think she loves him?"

At this Papa stiffened. Not even from her was he going to take any criticism of his little Bessie. Then in her eyes he saw that here was a woman in great trouble, giving him honesty and asking it in return.

FINALLY, he said slowly, "Bessie—was never one to be—she always kept herself *to* herself. If Mother hadn't died—like it always is with children, Bessie was the one that was different."

"Sonny and Cyrus were different," Mrs. Falkland said, "but they loved each other. Since Sonny died, Cyrus has tried to keep it from me how much he misses his brother. But I know."

"I wouldn't say Bessie misses her brothers and sisters exactly," Papa said. "They never had much in common. Bessie always wanted to get ahead. But Bessie's a good girl. She's been a good daughter to me."

"This is a big thing she's taken on," Mrs. Falkland said urgently. "It isn't all—play. There is so much to do."

"I met up with Mrs. Wilkins on the street tother day," Papa said. "She told me she hadn't ever found a girl was as good a worker since Bessie left. But it don't seem to me like Bessie figured to go on working after she got married."

Mrs. Falkland laughed a little. "I know," she said. "She—she probably didn't realize —but it is work, being rich. For instance, I wanted to ask her to handle a new endowment for me. I want to set up a school where we can teach the women who work for us something about money. I want to make the women understand the handling of money. I want to endow a school with a million dollars as the best teachers—practical teachers—"

Papa felt dazed. Then he felt frightened. Whatever it was for, Bessie would not want to give away a million dollars. That was a kind of work Bessie wasn't suited to.

"I know she will want you to be proud of her," Mrs. Falkland said. "I want you to help her. If you were with her more— She loves you—"

Jim Keegan's face fell. Well, it just went to show. Here he was with the *money* to go to the Lapidary Convention in a lower berth, and now one of his children was in trouble. And one of this lady's, that had lost a boy in the war.

"You must promise me to help," Mrs. Falkland said. "You must promise to help make Elizabeth see. It is for your people as well as mine. I ask you because you are the

CLANCY

COLLIER'S JOHN RUGE

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Beginning in Next Week's Collier's

HELL-BENT

By WALT GROVE

The bold and dramatic story of Robert Warren, who rebelled against the meaningless security of his postwar life and set out to recapture the sense of danger he had left behind in the war.

He found more danger than he had bargained for when he ran across his old colonel and the colonel's hard-boiled young lady. Between the two of them, they took Robert for quite a ride.

only person I am sure Elizabeth loves. I saw her look at you, that day in the church, when they were married."

So Papa promised. He said he'd have to think about it, he didn't know exactly what he could do, but he knew what Mother would expect of Bessie.

On his way back to Tuckapack he began to think and it hit him hard. If he was the only person—why, Mrs. Falkland believed Bessie had married for money. No wonder she looked sad. His face grew sterner than it had ever been in his whole life. He and Mrs. Falkland were, maybe, on different sides of life, but they could deal honestly with each other.

Bessie would have to deal honestly, too.

EIGHT days later, Forte, who had been in Antoinette Falkland's service almost as long as Lissa and Margaret Sawyer, came into young Mrs. Falkland's pleasant third-floor sitting room. He found young Mrs. Falkland on the telephone. She was often on the telephone. This time she was talking to a real-estate man about a house. The address and location, it seemed, were satisfactory, but young Mrs. Falkland wasn't sure it would be big enough for what she had in mind. However, she would come and look at it.

When she hung up, Forte said, "Mr. Fuceli is calling, madam."

Young Mrs. Falkland had been about to light a cigarette. The match held quite steady, but the flame burned down and down until she dropped it hurriedly and Forte moved to pick it up.

Mrs. Falkland put the cigarette down, unlighted. She said, "Will you please say, Forte, that I am out?"

"The gentleman," Forte said, "says he saw Madam come in. He also said he would wait until Madam could see him."

With a smile, Bessie said, "I knew Mr. Fuceli when I went to Tuckapack High School. I expect his feelings would be hurt—ask him to come up here, please."

Forte went out, and Bessie turned pensively to her mirror. Jake. She hadn't expected Jake, remembering how they'd parted the morning he drove her down from Zydercliff, when she'd slapped him.

Probably he would want to borrow money . . .

Jake looked about the same. Same blue suit, only this time the pull-over sweater was green, with white Christmas trees. His black eyes, always narrowed a little for fear he'd miss something, took in the room, took in with cold mirth young Mrs. Falkland, in superbly tailored tweeds.

Nor had his greeting altered. He said, "How y'doin', Bessie?"

At some threat in his voice, Bessie Falkland's thick lashes flickered. She said, "Very well, thank you. And you?"

"How do you think?" Jake said. He crossed the Aubusson carpet toward her. His face was entirely without expression. "You ought to know better, Bessie. You've lost your head. Did you think I was going to let you get away with it?"

Now she knew what was in his voice. Sheer vindictiveness. Honed in secret all this time to a razor edge. She knew about people like Jake. That was what she'd been trying to get through Cy's head all this time. Well, well. She would have to take care of Jake.

"You shouldn't have been so fresh," she said coldly.

"I wasn't too fresh for you to use, like you always used people," Jake said.

"That was your lookout," Bessie told him.

"It still is," Jake said, and he laughed soundlessly.

Then he lifted his hand and struck her, hard, across the mouth.

Bessie's hands became claws; the long, pointed polished nails unsheathed to tear his eyes out. Then she remembered where she was. This looked like it might be serious. "Keep cool," she told herself. "Keep cool, don't lose your head."

Jake watched her with bright eyes. He said, "It took me a while to figure that letter out. I always figured you were up to something like blackmail. I thought the whole thing smelled funny. If I hadn't known you so well, maybe I couldn't have put it together. It was a slick job, Bessie. But I always knowed you."

"You read it!" Bessie said.

"What'd *you* think?" Jake Fuceli said.

If only she could kill him here and now. With her hands. She couldn't move: hatred began to wrap around her, like the coils of a great snake, like the links of a heavy chain, squeezing brutally, knocking her breath out.

The letter Myra Matthewson had written to Cliff Quarrier. The letter Bessie had stolen and used to blackmail Myra. The letter that had made it possible for Bessie to force her way into Zydercliff. The letter that had made it possible for her to marry Cyrus Sayre Falkland for money. This was the letter Jake Fuceli had dared to read. She had forgotten that the letter had lain in Jake's safe all these months.

Bessie was suddenly terrified by all the dirty implications of the letter—Myra's unholy, illicit passion, Cliff Quarrier's treachery, and a greedy, unprincipled servant girl, willing to stoop to theft to gain her ends.

Why had she never seen these things before? Bessie saw herself for what she was: a blackmailer, the lowest type of criminal.

Papa would know. Poor Papa!

Papa and Mrs. Falkland—oh, no! —and the Moose, such a right guy—and Cyrus—

It came like a blinding flash of light too strong and magnificent for eyes accustomed only to the sun and the moon and the stars—as light and love came to bloodstained Saul on the road to Damascus.

Her knees gave. Bessie Keegan was on her knees, where in all her life she had never been before.

My darling. My husband. I love you. I shall lose you, I have lost you, and I love you so. This is love. Why didn't I know before? If I die for it, let me tell you I love you more than my life. How could I have been so blind, so blind as not to know I love you, I have always loved you?

She slid forward, arms outstretched across the chair, only her shining hair visible to the man who stood watching her.

THIS, then, was love. There was nothing easy about it, nothing romantic nor passionate. The thing itself, simple, clear, the highest human demand. Her heart begged for time to remember the things which must have been creating love all these days and weeks and months—but there was no time.

I love him, she thought, and was stunned and terrified. The one thing that couldn't happen to her, the one possibility she had never taken into consideration in all her clever schemes.

Forgive me, my darling, I've been so stupid. I'm a selfish fool.

Iron fingers pulled her to her feet. Jake Fuceli shook her and when he let her go she tottered and grabbed the back of the chair for support.

"Come off all that," Jake Fuceli said. "You ain't foolin' nobody."

If Cy would come. He'd kill this man for daring to put his hands on his wife.

No, no, no. One thing. Whatever happened, Cy mustn't know. He mustn't know this about the woman he loved.

So this was what it was like to be blackmailed for your dead sins. The circle was complete now. As ye would that men should do to you—Papa said it and she had laughed. But—she must cope with this man into whose hands she had put a weapon, she must steady her knees and clear her brain, and fight as she had never fought.

She took a deep breath. Now she could get her hands up and shove her hair back from her pinched, white face. "How much do you want?" she said.

In words of one syllable, Jake Fuceli told her. This was something older than the greed for gold. It was loose now, a mad thing scenting its prey. It was loose in Antoinette Falkland's house—malignant, reckless desire filled the room like gas in the death chamber.

"Take some lessons from your pal Myra," Jake Fuceli said. "There's a hot babe, boy oh boy! Looks like you society dames can give cards and spades to an honest streetwalker. *She* had plenty ideas how she could shake her husband and meet this character she was writing to—and where they were going and what they'd do when they got there."

Jake put on his hat and pulled down the brim; his face didn't change.

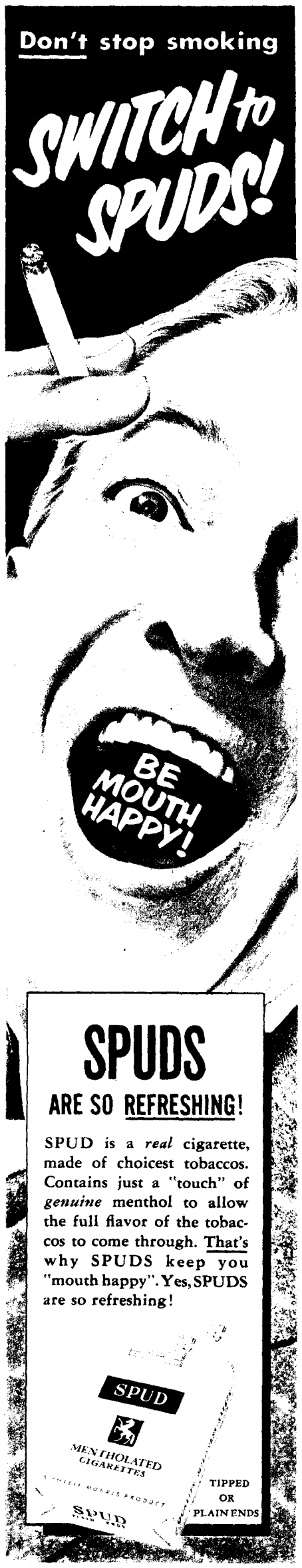
"You teased me along quite a while, didn't you, Bessie?" he said. "You did a lot of necking and wrastling around in the back seat and then wouldn't come through. I never said nothin'. I thought you was going to marry me. Then you picked up a joker with more dough."

He went as far as the door. She tried to call him back then, but her lips and her tongue and throat refused to obey her.

"Don't bother to ring," Jake Fuceli said mockingly. "I can get in and out by myself—I always have. Don't take it so hard, Bessie. You married this guy for his dough, huh? I should think you'd be ready for a friend like me on the side by now, like your friend Myra. You figure out how—and where. I'll call you up in a coupla days. Only don't try any of your monkeyshines, or I'll have to go and have a talk with this big shot you married. I expect it'll be quite a surprise to him. You probably got him fooled like you had me, once. I'll be seein' you, Bessie."

He closed the door quietly.

(To be concluded next week)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The wet beaver's path took him between Miss Hackett and the organ . . . suddenly the music stopped

Mr. Busby

A fantasy with a Christmas twist

By HERBERT COGGINS

ONE of my best friends is a beaver. Busby and I met on a camping trip. He was limping across the meadow, dragging an undersized steel trap on his hind leg. I easily caught up with him and while I was prying open the jaws of the trap his little button eyes showed perfect trust in me. When he was free a moment later he licked my hand, a beaver's expression of gratitude.

Although there was no broken bone my wife taped his leg. We decided it wasn't safe to turn him loose. A wild cat or a coyote would get the scent of even a dry wound. So we made him a cot out of a large carton in our tent and put him up for the night.

When we awoke the next morning our frowzy little guest was up and about and we could hear him outside stripping bark from one of the cottonwoods for his breakfast. But breakfast or no breakfast, he reached both hands for the piece of apple my wife offered him.

In spite of his limp Busby followed us about as we started breakfast and he even tracked me into the thicket for firewood. As I turned back to camp with my arms full I heard a rustling behind me. He was on my heels, dragging a large limb over his shoulder, beaver fashion. As he packed it on top of mine his eyes glowed with fervor. He thought we were starting a dam.

It was not pleasant to disillusion him and I felt his letdown as I cut the wood into fire lengths. At first he was merely puzzled by my wasteful action, but when I struck a match he became excited, smacking his tail on the ground with a loud whack —the beaver's warning signal. Convinced I was not to be trusted, he seized his own log and started down the bank.

At a safe distance he halted, squatted and looked back uneasily. After a few minutes the cooking food seemed to reassure him, but he was not comfortable again until my wife took a flapjack from the fire and treated him to a carefully cooled fragment. He showed his approval of our morning's project by the way he licked the sirup from both her fingers and his own.

Despite his natural fear of flames Busby soon grasped the attractive relationship between firewood and flapjacks, and for the rest of our stay we had only to make a gesture toward cooking and he would promptly rustle the firewood.

Before long, Busby would present me with a chunk of wood whenever he got hungry. I realized that he was a positive character who might well get the upper hand of us, and I decided to have an understanding from the first. When he brought me the next stick I broke it in halves, and placed it meaningly on the woodpile. After that I refused his offerings. He caught on quickly and thereafter gnawed the longer sticks in two and stacked them up near the fireplace.

It was during our little showdown that I christened him Mr. Busybody. When we knew him better and realized that his activity resulted largely from a great desire to serve, we softened the name to Busby. For the rest of our stay, as firewood became scarce around the camp, he so lightened our chores that we gladly overlooked his little backwoods mannerisms.

We could only guess what Busby's past life had been, alone and away from his tribe. Possibly he was the sole survivor of a beaver lodge in the higher mountains that had been trapped off; or, burdened as he was with the steel trap, he might have been cast out as a drone. But one thing was certain: if we left him in the wilds he would become the victim of some predatory animal. For his own safety we must take him home with us. Besides, as I knew from Indian lore, beavers make wonderful pets.

Back home we raised Busby a temporary house in the back corner of the yard and filled the old goldfish pond for his swimming pool. He was as attached to us as a puppy and we had no fear that he would try to escape. We gave him the run of our yard. But we soon found that fences played no part in his life pattern and he was as likely to pop up in a neighbor's garden as our own.

He was particularly fond of the Appleby grounds next door. Major Appleby, a recognized arboriculturist, had prized evergreens from all parts of the world. Doubtless their shade and piny odor were nostalgic to a forest beaver.

But even more, Busby was drawn to the Appleby rabbit pen that adjoined our back fence. Standing erect, he would press his face to the wire mesh and commune with his rodent cousins for long periods, occasionally emitting his rare puppylike squeak. If one of us happened by he would beat the wire mesh with his hands to get attention. At first I thought he was introducing me to his friends. Not until later did I understand that this was an expression of indignation. To him the rabbits' imprisonment was an outrage.

Had I read Busby's mind I would have been less surprised when a phone call from Major Appleby informed me that his boy's rabbits had escaped. While he made no formal charge, circumstantial evidence pointed to our Mr. Busby. That evidence was a large hole gnawed through the back of the rabbit house and authenticated by Busby's tooth marks. Hastening from *(Continued on page 70)*

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The Christmas Plane

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

command "Drop!" rang through the cabin. The men, protected by safety ropes, kicked in unison, and out toward the earth sailed 200 pounds of Christmas trees and presents.

The plane skimmed the rooftops, zoomed back to the sky and dived again. Out flew another package. Down, up and down once more. Through the turbulence among the hills, the chaplain and the plane's crew dived and climbed for two hours, before Cape Harrison's share of gifts lay safely in the snow.

As the chaplain resumed his seat, a bit the shakier for his experience, he tried to imagine the scene they were leaving below and behind them. Checkered tablecloths, popcorn-festooned ceilings in the mess hall, gallons of steaming coffee, two turkeys and six pumpkin pies.

On the other side of Labrador, Teska and his men circled again over Mingan, diving and climbing and emptying Christmas gently earthward on red and green and yellow parachute silk. With the gifts and the fir trees went the chaplain's greeting, broadcast by radio:

"The Christmas story reveals to us that the science of communications is as old as are the relationships between one man and another, and between God and man . . ."

Taking Off for Fort Chimo

Daylight was gone by the time that first errand was done, and the plane settled down at big Goose Bay to spend the night. At nine in the morning it was off again for Fort Chimo, with its Hudson's Bay Company store and the Eskimos who have names like Charlie One and Charlie Two and Spyglasses. By the time Chimo had got its presents another day was past.

Frobisher Bay was next . . . 340 miles across the Hudson Strait and the Grinnell icecap in southern Baffin Island. It was here last year that the Christmas plane lost one of its engines and had to turn back to Argentia without delivering the Christmas trees for the bases in Greenland.

This year Frobisher Bay was Teska's jumping-off place for tight, cold, snowed-in little Padloping Island. The plane took off in the dark, between rows of smoking flare pots, and hammered north over mountain ridges whose spiny tips were too sheer to hold snow.

The men on Padloping were waiting in the gray half-light. They had spelled out "Merry Xmas" on the snow at the camp's edge, with squares of black roofing paper. The tiny figures around the giant letters radioed the dryly humorous request that their gifts be dropped directly on the "X."

The arctic twilight would last exactly two hours the pilot knew as he crossed the island in a practice run. It was bitter cold in the cabin with the drop door open.

Chaplain Teska walked back and helped lash Padloping's Christmas tree to one of the parachute kits. Last Christmas was on his mind.

On that 1948 trip, a tree was dropped and the slip stream had slammed it against the plane's stabilizer, wedging it there. The pilot had circled and climbed and wobbled until he was six miles out above the sea ice. There he finally shook the greenery free.

The fallen symbol of Christmas had been torn and broken. But it meant so much to the men on the ground that they sent Eskimos out with a dog team to retrieve it.

This year the tree was safely down and the stars were out when the flying chaplain turned away from Padloping. The plane headed back over the glimmering wastelands to Frobisher Bay, where the crew refueled and slept.

Greenland's Bluie West Eight was the first stop on the next day's flight. It sat on the end of a dead glacier, where the air itself—50 below zero—seems to turn brittle, where iron wrenches can be snapped to bits across a man's knee and oil turns to putty.

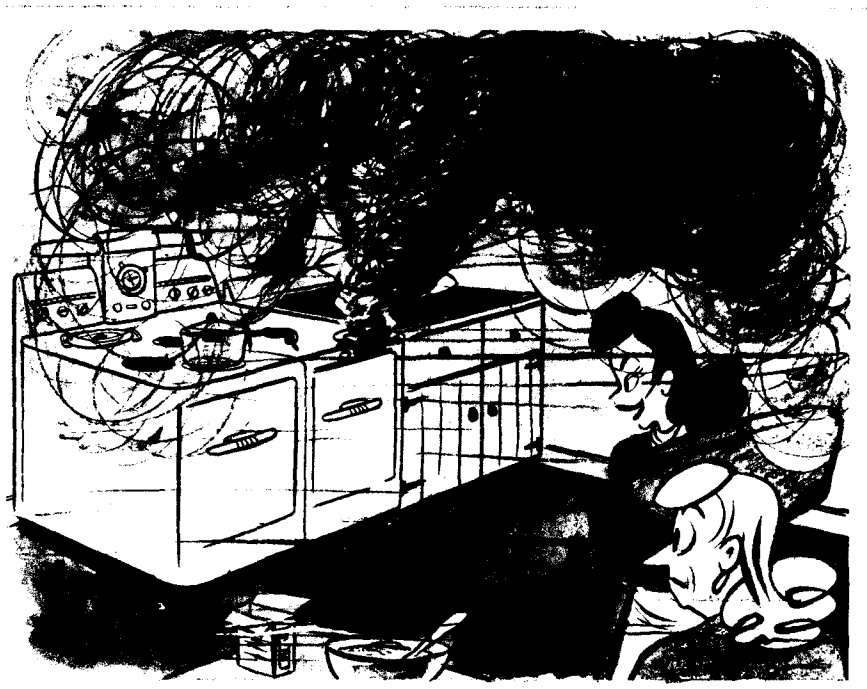
Five miles from the airstrip the edge of the Greenland icecap towered, 1,500 feet of sheer, greenish ice. Nevertheless, Chaplain Teska delivered his gifts and his Christmas trees.

The shortest route from Bluie West Eight to Bluie West One was over the icecap. But the pilot played it safe and returned to the sea through a fiord, then set a course down a tattered coast eerily embroidered with streams of icebergs.

After 600 miles of ice-spangled fog and smashing wind, the chaplain finally brought the spirit of giving to Bluie West One. After that, the only call he had left was Bluie West Three.

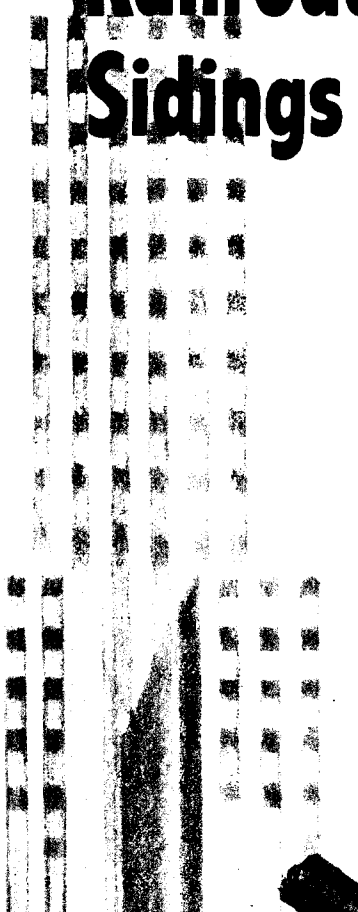
Bluie West Three was a forlorn string of buildings, half hidden by snow, at the bottom of a narrow gulch that bisects Simiutak Island. Its outlet to the sea was a cove that was frozen shut. Once again the chaplain's pilot did what seemed impossible; the last bundle of gifts and the last tree tumbled into the snow, and Captain Teska sent his last Christmas greeting of the year down from the sky:

"You are not alone or forgotten. As the Christmas story teaches us, the best of all is: God is with you!" THE END



COLLIER'S "Oh, I never interfere—it's completely automatic" GERALD GREEN

Skyscrapers grow on Railroad Sidings

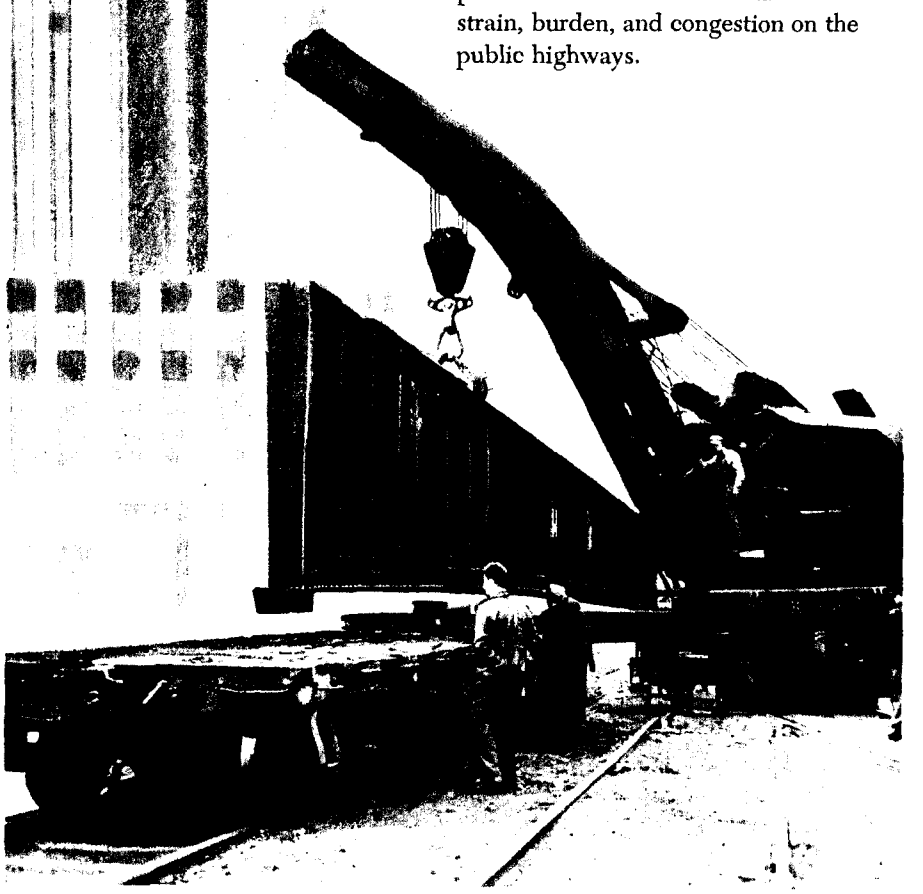


Steel for a skyscraper starts a long way from the site of the building – in ore pits, in mines and quarries, on *railroad cars*. The skyscraper itself begins to take shape on the railroad siding of a fabricating plant, as each numbered piece of steel is loaded on cars for delivery at the building site in its proper order for use.

This is but one example of the services of railroads – the one form of transportation which stands ready to move *anything* movable, for any shipper, in any quantity, in any season of the year, and anywhere the rails run.

This true common carrier service of the railroads is basic to our American economy – to our daily lives. To improve their service, the railroads have spent, just since the end of the war, nearly four billion dollars for new cars and locomotives, and for improvements to the highways of steel on which the trains run.

The more freight that is moved over these highways of steel, the lower will be the true cost of transportation – and the less will be the strain, burden, and congestion on the public highways.



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Diagnosis Deferred

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

"Delicious is right," Dr. Coffee said. "What's on your mind, Doctor?"

"Regret to report somewhat unfavorable complications involving Miss Hudson and paraffin blocks," the Hindu said. "Am reluctant to relate details via public communications system because of potential eavesdroppings. Are you returning to hospital this evening?"

Since Dr. Mookerji seemed to think the urgency was extreme, Dan Coffee hurried through his cheese and demitasse, climbed into his dyspneic prewar car, and drove back to his laboratory.

HE FOUND both the laboratory and Doris Hudson very much upset. Every workbench was cluttered with old pharmaceutical cartons which had spewed their contents of inch-square paraffin blocks with their wooden bases upward so that the numbered labels showed. Dr. Motilal Mookerji sat perched in the midst of the disarray.

"Larcenous happenings still continue," the Hindu said. "Disappearance of blocks from French autopsy confirms previous suspicion of felonious play. If still retaining doubts, Doctor Sahib, am suggesting Miss Hudson summon material witness."

Doris Hudson slipped into the hall and returned an instant later with Old Chris, the janitor of the surgical wing. Old Chris, who according to the personnel records had been baptized Christopher Bridges, was not terribly old, yet he had the appearance of a man who had stepped from another century. He limped. His one eye gleamed like a steel bearing. He rarely smiled, which was just as well, since there was little that was pleasant about his yellow, uneven teeth. It was incongruous to imagine a man of his piratical appearance growing flowers in the furnace room—no one would have been surprised to learn that he cultivated hellebore, hemlock and the deadly nightshade—or even performing innocuous janitorial duties. He drank, but he did his drinking when off duty and seemed to be a satisfactory janitor.

"Kindly inform doctor of intruder surprised last night," said Dr. Mookerji.

"What intruder?" Old Chris asked.

"You were reporting previously that upon arriving to clean laboratory last night, you were aware of scampering feet, and that upon switching on illumination, you perceived unknown person or persons retreating into unlighted bacteriology laboratory."

"So what?"

"You did not ascertain identity of intruder?"

"I don't snoop," said Old Chris. "I ain't a cop and I ain't a stool pigeon. I'm just a janitor."

"But," the Hindu insisted, "you previously related that you opened door to bacteriology lab and snatched glimpse of intruder departing on far side."

"So what?" Old Chris repeated. "I thought it was just some intern lookin' for a quiet place to make a pass at some nurse. That's outside my line o' work. I just come here to clean up."

"Perhaps Dr. Mookerji didn't explain," Dan Coffee interjected, "that something has been stolen from the lab. Can you tell us what this man looked like?"

"No," said Old Chris. "It was dark, and the guy had his back turned. All I could see for sure is he didn't wear skirts. I'm sure it was a man."

"You're not being very helpful," Dr. Coffee said.

"I didn't steal anything out of your lab," Old Chris growled. "Didn't know there was anything here to steal except a lot of germs and a bunch of secondhand tonsils. All I know is I saw a man in here last night. Can I go now? I got work to do." He limped away.

Dan Coffee ran his long fingers through his hair. He said, "Dr. Mookerji, get me the protocol on the French case. Doris, call Max Ritter. No, never mind. No use getting the police in on this until we know what we're up against. Ask Dr. Lang to come up here, Doris. Thanks, Doctor."

The pathologist thumbed through the sheaf of multicolored documents pertaining to the death of the late Mrs. Isabel French—the clinical charts, the nurses' records, the death certificate, the autopsy permission, the necropsy report. He read every line describing the treatment of the case. "Dr. Probert ordered injection 300,000 units penicillin in oil . . ." He turned the page ". . . 3:20 P.M. patient in profound shock . . . Dr. Lang ordered adrenalin and asked that Dr. Probert be called . . . 4:55 P.M. Patient's breathing barely perceptible . . . 5:29 P.M. Patient pronounced dead by Dr. Probert."

Nothing unusual here. He shuffled the papers to straighten them out, and a flake of color slipped from between the pages and fluttered to the desk. Dr. Coffee picked up a pink camellia petal. It was limp and moist. It could not have been between the sheets of the French reports for very long—twenty-four hours at most.

"Thank heavens! I had a hunch you might have invited those dopey Smiths over to surprise me on my birthday!"

COLLIER'S — HERB WILLIAMS

"I wonder," Dan Coffee said, half to himself, "if Old Chris wasn't too insistent about seeing a *man* in the lab last night." . . .

"You sent for me, Doctor?"

Dan Coffee looked up to find Dr. Orville Lang standing before him. The young intern wore a wispy mustache—doubtless in an effort to achieve a mature look that would inspire confidence at the bedside.

"Yes. Take a chair," Dr. Coffee said. "I have a few questions about the death of Mrs. Isabel French. It was your case, I believe."

"It was really Dr. Probert's case," Dr. Lang said, "but I was pretty much in on it after she was admitted. After all, she was my aunt."

"Did you know her before she came to Northbank to die?"

"Slightly," the intern replied. "I was in the Pacific with the Navy, and I saw her a few times when I was ashore in Honolulu. She was a grand old lady."

"Was there any bad blood between Mrs. French and her daughter Martha?" the pathologist asked.

"No, not that I know of. Why do you ask?"

"I've been told that Mrs. French hadn't seen Martha for nearly ten years before she came here for the wedding. Isn't that an unusual mother-daughter relationship?"

"Not if you knew Aunt Isabel," the intern said. "The old lady really meant to come to the States before this. She had her passage booked half a dozen times, but always canceled at the last minute. Too busy. She was a fabulous character—a cross between a feudal tyrant and a modern business executive. She owned five sugar plantations in the islands and managed them all herself."

"Was she opposed to Martha's marrying Emory Jamison?" Dr. Coffee asked. "Do you think she might have come to Northbank to stop the marriage?"

"I don't think so," Dr. Lang replied. "Why should she? Martha and Emory are very much in love and I'm sure they'll be very happy together. I know Martha considers herself lucky to have met a man like Emory—regardless of his money."

"Has Martha returned to the hospital since her mother's death?"

"She was here last night with Emory."

"Did either of them go to the lab—perhaps looking for me?"

"I couldn't say. Martha came to see me about a family matter. We talked for about ten minutes in the head nurse's office in Five West. Emory sat in the waiting room."

"Do you remember if she was wearing a corsage?" Dan Coffee asked.

"As a matter of fact, she was," Dr. Lang said. "Old Chris had just brought her some pink camellias. The old pirate was always bringing her flowers he grows himself. He's had a strange crush on her for years. What are you driving at, Doctor?"

"I was wondering," said the pathologist, "if you noticed anything unusual about the course of Mrs. French's pneumonia—anything that might indicate the fatal outcome was . . . well, deliberately induced."

"No-o." Dr. Lang hesitated. "It was disappointing, of course, that she didn't react to the penicillin, but she was pretty far along when we got her. What did the autopsy show?"

"We haven't been able to complete the microscopic diagnosis," Dan Coffee said. "That's just the point. Somebody stole the slides. And the paraffin blocks."

"Stole the—? I'll be damned!" Dr. Lang's little mustache twitched. "But you'll make new sections, of course. You keep the original tissue, don't you?"

"Yes, we always keep the tissue until we've completed the— Doris!"

The thought that crossed Dr. Coffee's mind must have reached his chief technician at the same moment. Doris Hudson was already unlocking the door of a big oak cabinet.

Dr. Coffee was at her shoulder, scanning the row of Mason jars with their macabre bits of tissue in formalin. He read the labels: "Mary Millison, 2-3-49 . . . Baby Torbert, 2-6-49 . . . John C. Derring . . ." Dr. Coffee continued to read until he saw "Isabel French, 2-17-49." He seized the jar with his big hands.

"This goes home with me tonight," he said. "I'll keep it under my pillow."

"You'll do nothing of the kind." Doris Hudson reached for the jar. "This is my job. I'll guarantee you get the slides this time."

"Then I'll go home and get some sleep," Dr. Coffee said. "What's on your mind, Chris?"

The janitor had come into the laboratory unobserved. He stood just inside the door, leaning on a broom handle. His one good eye glittered as he stared at the Mason jar in the technician's hands. "Find what was missing?" he asked.

"No," said Dr. Coffee. "Doris, when you start cutting the new sections, I'll want the usual haematoxylin-eosin stain of course. And I also want you to process a complete set with acid-fast dye. And make another set with osmic-acid stain, and one with—"

"Silver nitrate," Doris volunteered. "I know the routine, Doctor. You want all the trick stains you order when you're not sure exactly what you're looking for."

"How soon can I start sweeping up in here?" Old Chris demanded.

"I'll be leaving in half an hour," Doris said.

"I'm going now." Dan Coffee reached for his overcoat. "Good night, folks."

As he left the front entrance of the hospital, Dr. Coffee saw a couple alighting from a shiny new coupé that had the modest lines of a Diesel locomotive. The man was very tall and looked even taller beside his petite companion. They walked arm in arm, very slowly and very close together, obviously alone in a beautiful world all their own. As he passed them, the girl said, "Good evening, Doctor," and Dan Coffee recognized Martha French. The man, he supposed, was Emory Jamison. Such frank adoration made Dan Coffee feel warm and young inside. He also felt a little ashamed of the suspicious thoughts about Martha and Emory that had been haunting him all evening. He could not, however, forget that pink camellia petal caught among the postmortem pages of the case of Isabel French.

Greatly disturbed, he got into his own car and drove home.

DR. COFFEE had scarcely fallen asleep when his telephone rang. He fumbled in the dark for the instrument.

"Hi, Doc," said a voice which he recognized as that of Max Ritter, lieutenant of detectives, Northbank police. "You been holding out on me. Crime raises its ugly head in your lab and you don't call the cops. What's the idea?"

"Well, I'm not sure yet it's crime, Max."

"It's crime, all right," Ritter said. "Get your pants on quick and hurry down to the Crestwood Apartments. I'll wait for you."

"What's up, Max?"

"I can't talk any more now, Doc. Make it snappy." And the detective hung up.

Dr. Coffee dressed hastily. All signs of sleep had vanished. Doris Hudson lived at the Crestwood Apartments. The pathologist drove as fast as he dared.

An ambulance and two police cars were parked in front of the Crestwood. Dr. Coffee ran up the stairs. The door of Apartment 3-A was open. Beyond a group of policemen, Doris Hudson lay propped up on a sofa. An ambulance attendant was bandaging her head. She was very pale, but she managed to smile as she said:

"I guess I'll live, Doctor. But I turned out to be an awful imbecile. I apologize."

"Just cuts and abrasions, Doc. No concussion," said Max Ritter, emerging from the kitchenette with a glass of beer in his hand. "Lucky for me she loves you dearly, Doc. She didn't want to wake you up so she called the cops. You shouldn't be so secretive, Doc."

"Begin at the beginning, Doris," Dan Coffee said.

Doris winced as the attendant gave the gauze a final twist and finished his bandage.

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"After you left," she began, "Dr. Mookerji went through the tissue and cut me the specimens he thought you'd want. I put them into an alcohol bath and brought them home with me, expecting to change them to xylol in the morning. I rode the bus to the corner as usual and walked the half block o my door. I let myself in—"

"Just a minute," Dr. Coffee interrupted. "Did you notice a car parked at your curb —a big, shiny, expensive-looking coupé?"

"There were several cars parked in the street. But I didn't notice any of them particularly. I opened the street door. Just as I stepped inside, something hit me on the head. I sort of went to sleep. I couldn't have been out for very long because when I came to, I was lying on the floor and blood was running into my eyes. I dragged myself up the steps to a telephone—"

"And the tissue?" Dr. Coffee broke in.

"The jar was gone, of course," Doris said. "I'm sorry, Doctor."

"It's all my fault for not taking this thing seriously enough," the pathologist said.

"Okay, now break down and tell me what this is all about," Max Ritter said.

"Without the tissue, I'm afraid we may never know," Dr. Coffee said. "Unless—" He picked up the telephone, dialed Pasteur Hospital and asked for Dr. Mookerji.

The high-pitched voice of the Hindu resident made the receiver buzz with shrill tones that could be heard across the room. When Dr. Coffee hung up, he was smiling.

"What's your swami got to offer?" Ritter asked.

"Dr. Mookerji," the pathologist said, "having suspected felonious skulduggery from the outset, took the precaution of keeping the remainder of the tissue from which he had snipped the specimens for Doris. He says he's still got it."

"I could kiss that magnificent Hindu," Doris Hudson breathed.

"Max," Dr. Coffee said, "you'd better station two husky boys in blue in my lab until we're ready with the new slides. And send them up right now." . . .

It would be at least thirty-six hours before the new sections were ready for the microscope. First came successive baths of alcohol, xylol and acetone to remove the water and formalin from the tissue; that took eighteen hours. After that Doris would put the bits of tissue into paper-lined compartments of an ice-cube tray, fill the compartments with melted paraffin and leave the lot in an electric oven for twelve more hours. When the blocks had hardened, they would be shaved into sections four ten-thousandths of an inch thin, and the transparent sections would be stained and mounted on glass slides.

MEANWHILE Lieutenant Max Ritter found plenty to keep himself busy. At noon the next day he appeared at the pathology lab to inquire after the health of Doris Hudson, who was back at work, and to report to Dr. Coffee.

"When do we talk some more to that cute little redheaded nurse, Doc?" he asked.

"After I've had a chance to look at the new slides tomorrow," the pathologist replied.

"She's getting ready to take a powder," the detective said. "I put a tail on her, and Brody says her bags are loaded in that Sherman tank her boy friend uses for a pleasure car. I think I'll give 'em a little rope. But I'll bring 'em back if they try to leave the state. Or if they try to get married—on account of that law about husbands and wives not being required to testify against each other. . . . And what about this young intern, this Dr. Lang?"

"Dr. Lang is clear, so far as I can see," Dan Coffee said. "He knows our routine here. He wouldn't have stolen just the slides and blocks, knowing that we keep the original tissue—and he had plenty of opportunity to clean out the whole works, if he was out to destroy evidence."

"Then there's this janitor, Christopher Bridges, that lives down in the subbasement," the detective went on. "I called on him, but he wasn't home, so I had a look around his room. Besides a lot of empty bottles, I found a couple of books I thought you ought to look at, Doc."

Dan Coffee thumbed over two textbooks on bacteriology and microscopic technique. At that moment Dr. Motilal Mookerji waddled in like a frightened duck.

"Pardon rude interruption," the Hindu said, "but elderly janitor is causing frenzied disturbance outside door, claiming burglarous invasion of privacy."

"Bring him in, Swami," Ritter ordered.

OLD CHRIS limped in, vociferously demanding the return of his books. "How do you happen to be reading books like this, Chris?" Dan Coffee asked.

"I don't read 'em. But I want 'em back. They're mine."

"We know that, Chris. Your name is on the flyleaf—C. Bridges."

"That 'C' stands for Catherine," the janitor said. "She was my daughter. She would have been the same age as Martha French, and just as pretty. She had red hair, too. She was studying for a lab job when she—"

"I see," Dan Coffee said softly. "So you were lying to protect Martha French. You admit, don't you, Chris, that it was Martha you surprised in the lab the other night?"

"I don't admit nothing. I want the books."

Ritter looked at the pathologist inquiringly. Dan Coffee nodded. "Let him take them," he said.

"You're a softy, Doc," the detective said as the janitor stumped away. "How do we know the old gimp don't have some senile complex? How do we know he don't have some billy-goat fixation? How—"

"We don't know a damned thing, Max," Dr. Coffee said. "And we won't—until tomorrow."

"Okay, Doc." Ritter shrugged. "In the meantime, I got a few other leads to run down." . . .

Dr. Coffee had heard nothing further from Lieutenant Ritter by the time the new Isabel French sections were cut and mounted the next day. Ritter's two policemen, however, were still standing guard in the laboratory when the pathologist sat down to his microscope.

"Dr. Mookerji," he said after a while, "I'm going to borrow your eyes. I'm looking at a histological pattern with which I'm not at all familiar."

The Hindu slid into Dr. Coffee's chair. As he twisted the focusing knobs, he emitted strange clucking sounds that may have expressed pleasure, surprise, or merely intensive cerebration.

Standing at his shoulder, Dr. Coffee said tentatively, "Hansen's bacillus?"

"Quite," said the Hindu. "No question. Have observed same in Calcutta."

"You know, I haven't seen a slide like this since I left medical school," Dr. Coffee mused. "We don't get many in this country. In all my career I've been asked for a diagnosis on a suspected case only once, and that was a request for an examination of nasal mucosa that Dr. Spencer sent in last month. I—Doris, will you call Max Ritter and ask how soon he can get Martha French back here?"

"Martha's back already—and how!" Doris Hudson said. "I've had a devil of a time trying to keep her out of the lab for the past half hour. She wants to scratch your eyes out, Doctor."

"Get her for me, will you, Doris?"

Dr. Mookerji had slipped another section under the microscope.

"Kindly observe section from spleen," he said. "Please note large foamy cells. Quite characteristic globi nodules in lymph nodes."

Then Martha French stormed in. Black was becoming to Martha. So was her passionate rage. "How dare you send the police after us to bring us back?" she demanded. "How dare you try to stop our marriage? If you think—"

"Why were you running away, Martha?"

"We weren't running away. We just wanted to get married. You wouldn't understand, would you, that two people might be so much in love with each other that ev-

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ery hour they're not married seems like a year wasted?"

"That's because of my advanced age," Dan Coffee said quietly. "Sit down, Martha, and tell me what you were doing in my lab two nights ago."

Martha took off one glove with quick, nervous movements. She broke two matches before she succeeded in lighting her cigarette. She blew out the flame with a cloud of smoke.

"So Old Chris told on me," she said

"On the contrary. Old Chris tried hard to cover up for you. Obviously you were looking at the autopsy report. What did you expect to find?"

Martha tamped out her cigarette against an empty watch glass. She did not reply.

"So you knew of your mother's condition?" Dan Coffee pursued.

"Yes. I knew she'd been in Molokai for a time. But she was discharged four years ago as an arrested case."

"Is that why she sent you to the States—why she hadn't seen you in ten years?"

"Yes."

"Does Emory Jamison know about this?"

"No. Oh, no!" There was panic in her voice.

"Martha," the pathologist said, "did you really think that stealing those post-mortem sections would conceal your secret forever?"

"I didn't steal your slides!" The panic vanished. The fury returned. "Look, Doctor. I'm so terribly in love with Emory that I can't see straight." She sprang up. "Nothing can stop me from marrying him. Understand? Let go of me!"

MARTHA shook off Dan Coffee's restraining hand, caromed off Dr. Mookerji's midriff, and rushed across the laboratory. The door slammed behind her.

"Lady seems quite determined person," said Dr. Mookerji. "Moreover, notwithstanding frail appearance, lady has high-powered muscles—sufficient for administering goodly bang to cranium of Doris Hudson."

"Let's finish our diagnosis, Doctor," the pathologist said.

Dr. Coffee finished dictating his findings to Doris Hudson, then picked up a tray of slides stained with osmic acid. The tissue stained with osmic acid presented a picture different from that of the same tissue dyed with the pink and blue of the usual haematoxylin-eosin and from the red and green of the acid-fast sections. Osmic acid stained lipoid cells—fats and oils—black.

Dr. Coffee gave a startled exclamation. The microscopic field was peppered with black spots.

"Dr. Mookerji," he said, "come and look at this lung section."

"Most extraordinary," the Hindu said, his eyes at the microscope. "Fat embolism?"

"Oil probably," the pathologist replied. "You were right, Doctor. Mrs. French was murdered. Doris, try to reach Martha French again for me, will you?"

Doris was trying without success when Max Ritter walked into the laboratory.

"Hi, Doc," he said. "Hi, Swami. Anybody seen Martha French?"

"She left here about half an hour ago," the pathologist said. "What's wrong, Max?"

"This guy Emory Jamison is in a blue swivet," the detective said. "He's down at the station house now. Seems Martha left him about an hour ago, and after she left he found this note in his mailbox."

Ritter showed the pathologist a slip of paper on which was written: "This is good-by, of course. I know you understand. Love, Martha."

"This Martha's handwriting?" Dr. Coffee asked.

"Jamison says there's no question about it."

"Come on, Max." Dr. Coffee grabbed his hat and coat. "Let's hurry. I'm afraid we may have another murder in the making."

"Hey, wait." Ritter tried to keep pace with Dan Coffee's long strides as they rushed toward the elevator. "Where are we going?"

"If Martha French were to be found dead—supposedly a suicide because of remorse over having caused her mother's death—where would you be likely to look for her?"

"Why, I guess we'd find her beside her mother's grave," Ritter said.

"Then that's where we're going—to the cemetery."

"Well, okay. But I think I got a big break for us on another angle. I was talking to Honolulu by overseas telephone this afternoon, and—"

"We've got to get out there before dark," Dan Coffee said.

With siren shrieking, the police car ran through six red lights. There was scarcely time for Dr. Coffee to tell the detective about the day's microscopic adventures, or for Ritter to give the details of his telephone conversation with Isabel French's lawyer in Honolulu, before they were in the outskirts of Northbank, passing the stonecutters' and florists' shops that lined the approaches to the cemetery.

"It's not quite dark enough yet, Max," Dr. Coffee said. "Let's sit in one of those little cafés down the road, where we can watch the gate."

They doubled back to a neon sign just beyond the florists'.

In a far corner of the café, Martha French was sitting in a booth with Dr. Orville Lang. She did not seem perturbed to see Ritter and Dan Coffee.

"Orville phoned me he was taking some fresh flowers for Mother's grave," Martha said. "He asked me to meet him here to talk over some family matters. Will you join us?"

"We have some silly questions to ask," Dr. Coffee said.

"For instance," Ritter said, "I was talking to Honolulu this afternoon about Mrs. French's will. She left everything to Martha except that the income from three sugar plantations on"—Ritter consulted the back of a dog-eared envelope—"Maui, Lanai and Kauai would go to Orville Lang for five years, so he could be financially independent and afford to get married without waiting to set up his own practice. I thought maybe, since Martha wasn't engaged to Dr. Lang any more and was going to marry Emory Jamison instead—I thought maybe Mrs. French changed her will. The Honolulu lawyer says not. What about it, Martha?"

"I don't think she did," Martha said. "Neither Orville nor I heard her say anything about it during her few lucid moments."

"Martha," Dr. Coffee asked, "do you remember who gave your mother her injections of penicillin in oil?"

"Why, yes," Martha replied. "Orville did."

"And the final injection of adrenalin—which I suppose was an aqueous solution?"

"Dr. Lang gave that, too," Martha said. "But it wasn't an aqueous solution. It was in oil."

"Max," said Dr. Coffee, "you'd better arrest Dr. Lang for the murder of Isabel French."

DR. LANG smiled. "Aunt Isabel died of pneumonia," he said, fingering his little mustache. "Dr. Probert himself signed the death certificate."

"Aunt Isabel certainly had a severe case of double lobar pneumonia," Dr. Coffee said, "but the penicillin might have saved her life—if it had been injected intramuscularly. But if she'd lived, she might have changed her will, Dr. Lang, in view of Martha's impending marriage to Jamison. So to avoid this unpleasant prospect, Lang, you injected the penicillin intravenously." Dr. Coffee turned to Ritter. "You see, Max, oil injections are given into a muscle, not only to insure slow and steady absorption, but because an intravenous injection presents the danger of causing a fatal embolism on the lungs. Our deferred post-mortem diagnosis shows that Mrs. French died of just such a lipoid embolism. And the only way the oil could have reached the lungs would be through a deliberately erroneous injection into a vein.

"Max," Dr. Coffee went on, "those stolen slides had me fooled for a while. I thought they'd been taken—by Martha, or Jamison, or maybe even Old Chris—to conceal the fact that Mrs. French was an arrested case of leprosy. Actually, Dr. Lang stole them to call attention to that fact. He knew we kept the original tissue, and he thought that by making the case unusual, we would do

COLLIER'S

"Only nine more days until Christmas and look at him!"

BARNEY TOBEY

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more than a routine reading of the sections. And he felt sure that an expert on tropical medicine like Dr. Mookerji would turn up Hansen's bacillus. There's a pretty widespread horror of leprosy in this country, and the discovery could well have broken up Martha's marriage to Jamison. Then, with a five-year endowment working in his favor, Lang thought he had a chance of winning Martha back.

"When Lang overheard me ordering a set of slides stained with osmic acid, he knew there was a good chance of our spotting the fact that Mrs. French died of an oil embolism. That's why he waylaid Doris and recovered the residual tissue. Unluckily for Lang, our astute Hindu resident had retained portions of the specimens. So—"

"Hey, Doc!" Ritter yelled. "Grab him!"

There was a blinding flash, an explosion that roared and echoed from the corners of the café, and the air was acrid with the smell of burnt powder.

Dr. Lang slipped from his seat and sprawled on the floor, a small pearl-handled revolver in his hand.

Dr. Coffee, kneeling beside the intern, said, "You can call an ambulance, Max, but it won't do any good."

Martha French, staring at the pearl-handled revolver, said, as though in a trance, "That's my mother's gun. I remember, as a little girl, that she always carried it in her bag when she was traveling."

Dr. Coffee got to his feet, as he continued: "Martha, that bullet was originally meant for you. Two days ago, Lang still hoped to marry you. But once he knew the microscope was going to reveal the true cause of your mother's death, his sole concern was self-preservation. You were the only witness to the fact that he was the one who gave the oil injections, so you had to die tonight—in the cemetery, after dark. Your body would have been found on your mother's grave. It would have looked like suicide."

"And here's the suicide's farewell note," said Ritter, displaying the paper Jamison had found in his mailbox. "Recognize this?"

"Why, yes. I wrote it to Orville when I returned his engagement ring, after I decided to marry—"

And Martha French fainted. . . .

Martha came to in her own bed. "Emory, darling," she said, "I'd like to talk to Dr. Coffee alone for a moment."

When the door had closed, she continued: "Doctor, have you told Emory about—Mother's stay in Molokai?"

"No," said the pathologist.

"Maybe I was wrong in not telling him," Martha said, "but none of you know just how contagious the disease is, if it's contagious at all. And I hadn't seen Mother in ten years. Besides," she added, "Did Dr. Spencer ask you for a diagnosis several weeks ago?"

"Yes, Martha," Dr. Coffee said. "It was negative."

"I was Dr. Spencer's patient. I had to find out whether I had any trace of leprosy. I wouldn't have married Emory if you'd found anything. Are you going to tell Emory anyhow?"

"No," said Dr. Coffee, "but you are. And if he loves you as much as he ought to, it won't make any difference."

Martha French kissed the pathologist soundly. "Oh, it won't," she said. "I know it won't." THE END

How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

men at this announcement, but whether of satisfaction or disgust was not plain. "Yes," continued the Old Man in the lugubrious tone he had, within the last few moments, unconsciously adopted—"yes, Christmas, and tonight's Christmas Eve. Ye see, boys, I kinder thought—that is, I sorter had an idee, jest passin' like, you know—that maybe ye'd all like to come over to my house tonight and have a sort of tear 'round. But I suppose, now, you wouldn't? Don't feel like it, maybe?" he added with anxious sympathy.

"Well, I don't know," responded Tom Flynn with some cheerfulness. "P'r'aps we may. But how about your wife, Old Man? What does *she* say to it?"

The Old Man hesitated. His conjugal experience had not been a happy one, and the fact was known to Simpson's Bar.

His first wife, a delicate, pretty little woman, had suffered keenly and secretly from the jealous suspicions of her husband, until one day he invited the whole Bar to his house to expose her infidelity.

On arriving, the party found the shy, petite creature quietly engaged in her household duties, and retired abashed and discomfited. But the sensitive woman did not easily recover from the shock of this extraordinary outrage. It was with difficulty she regained her equanimity sufficiently to release her lover from the closet in which he was concealed and escape with him. She left a boy of three years to comfort her bereaved husband. The Old Man's present wife had been his cook. She was large, loyal and aggressive.

BEFORE he could reply, Joe Dimmick suggested with great directness that it was the "Old Man's house," and that, invoking the Divine Power, if the case were his own, he would invite whom he pleased, even if in so doing he imperiled his salvation. The Powers of Evil, he further remarked, should contend against him vainly. All this delivered with a terseness and vigor lost in this necessary translation.

"In course. Certainly. Thet's it," said the Old Man with a sympathetic frown. "Thar's no trouble about *thet*. It's my own house, built every stick on it myself. Don't you be afeard o' her, boys. She *may* cut up a trifle rough—ez wimmin do—but she'll come 'round." Secretly the Old Man trusted to the exaltation of liquor and the power of courageous example to sustain him in such an emergency.

As yet, Dick Bullen, the oracle and leader of Simpson's Bar, had not spoken. He now took his pipe from his lips. "Old Man, how's that yer Johnny gettin' on? Seems to me he didn't look so peart last time I seed him on the bluff heavin' rocks at Chinamen. Didn't seem to take much interest in it. Thar was a gang of 'em by yar yesterday—drownded out up the river—and I kinder thought o' Johnny, and how he'd miss 'em! Maybe, now, we'd be in the way ef he wus sick?"

The father, evidently touched not only by this pathetic picture of Johnny's deprivation, but by the considerate delicacy of the speaker, hastened to assure him that Johnny was better and that a "little fun might 'liven him up." Whereupon Dick arose, shook himself, and saying, "I'm ready. Lead the way, Old Man; here goes," himself led the way with a leap, a characteristic howl, and darted out into the night. As he passed through the outer room he caught up a blazing brand from the hearth. The action was repeated by the rest of the party, closely following and elbowing one another, and before the astonished proprietor of Thompson's grocery was aware of the intention of his guests, the room was deserted.

The night was pitchy dark. In the first gust of wind their temporary torches were extinguished, and only the red brands dancing and flitting in the gloom like drunken will-o'-the-wisps indicated their whereabouts. Their way led up Pine Tree Cañon, at the head of which a broad, low, bark-thatched cabin burrowed in the mountainside. It was the home of the Old Man, and the entrance to the tunnel in which he worked when he worked at all. Here the crowd paused for a moment, out of delicate deference to their host, who came up panting in the rear.

"P'r'aps ye'd better hold on a second out yer, whilst I go in and see thet things is all right," said the Old Man, with an indifference he was far from feeling. The suggestion was graciously accepted, the door opened and closed on the host, and the crowd, leaning their backs against the wall and cowering under the eaves, waited and listened.

For a few moments there was no sound but the dripping of water from the eaves, and the stir and rustle of wrestling boughs above them. Then the men became uneasy, and whispered suggestion and suspicion passed from the one to the other. "Reckon she's caved in his head the first lick!" "Decoyed him inter the tunnel and barred him up, likely." "Got him down and sittin' on him." "Prob'ly b'ilin' suthin' to heave on us: Stand clear the door, boys!" For just then the latch clicked, the door slowly opened, and a voice said, "Come in out o' the wet."

The voice was neither that of the Old Man nor of his wife. It was the voice of a small boy, its weak treble broken by that preternatural hoarseness which only vagabondage and the habit of premature self-assertion can give. It was the face of a small boy that looked up at theirs—a face that might have been pretty and even refined but that it was darkened by evil knowledge from within, and dirt and hard experience from without. He had a blanket around his shoulders and had evidently just risen from his bed.

"Come in," he repeated, "and don't make no noise. The Old Man's in there talking to Mar," he continued, pointing to an adjacent room which seemed to be a kitchen, from which the Old Man's voice came in deprecating accents. "Let me be," he added, querulously, to Dick Bullen, who had caught him up, blanket and all, and was affecting to toss him into the fire, "let go o' me, you d——d old fool, d'ye hear?"

THUS adjured, Dick Bullen lowered Johnny to the ground with a smothered laugh, while the men, entering quietly, ranged themselves around a long table of rough boards which occupied the center of the room. Johnny then gravely proceeded to a cupboard and brought out several articles which he deposited on the table. "Thar's whisky. And crackers. And red herons. And cheese." He took a bite of the latter on his way to the table. "And sugar." He scooped up a mouthful en route with a small and very dirty hand. "And terbacker. Thar's dried appils too on the shelf, but I don't admire 'em. Appils is swellin'. Thar," he concluded, "now wade in, and don't be afeard. *I* don't mind the old woman. She don't b'long to *me*. S'long."

He had stepped to the threshold of a small room, scarcely larger than a closet, partitioned off from the main apartment, and holding in its dim recess a small bed. He stood there a moment looking at the company, his bare feet peeping from the blanket, and nodded.

"Hello, Johnny! You ain't goin' to turn in agin, are ye?" said Dick.

"Yes, I are," responded Johnny, decidedly.

"Why, wot's up, old fellow?"

"I'm sick."

"How sick?"

"I've got a fevier. And childblains. And roomatiz," returned Johnny, and vanished within. After a moment's pause, he added in the dark, apparently from under the bedclothes, "And biles!"

There was an embarrassing silence. The men looked at one another, and at the fire. Even with the appetizing banquet before them, it seemed as if they might again fall into the despondency of Thompson's grocery, when the voice of the Old Man, incautiously lifted, came deprecatingly from the kitchen.

"Certainly! Thet's so. In course they is. A gang o' lazy drunken loafers, and that ar Dick Bullen's the ornariest of all. Didn't hev no more sabe than to come round yar with sickness in the house and no provision. Thet's what I said: 'Bullen,' sez I, 'it's crazy drunk you are, or a fool,' sez I, 'to think o' such a thing. Staples,' I sez, 'be you a man, Staples, and 'spect to raise h-ll under my roof and invalids lyin' 'round?' But they would come—

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they would. Thet's wot you must 'spect o' such trash as lays round the Bar."

A burst of laughter from the men followed this unfortunate exposure. Whether it was overheard in the kitchen, or whether the Old Man's irate companion had just then exhausted all other modes of expressing her contemptuous indignation, I cannot say, but a back door was suddenly slammed with great violence. A moment later and the Old Man reappeared, haply unconscious of the cause of the late hilarious outburst, and smiled blandly.

"The old woman thought she'd jest run over to Mrs. McFadden's for a sociable call," he explained, with jaunty indifference, as he took a seat at the board.

Oddly enough, it needed this untoward incident to relieve the embarrassment that was beginning to be felt by the party, and their natural audacity returned with their host. I do not propose to record the convivialities of that evening. The inquisitive reader will accept the statement that the conversation was characterized by the same intellectual exaltation, the same cautious reverence, the same fastidious delicacy, the same rhetorical precision, and the same logical and coherent discourse somewhat later in the evening, which distinguish similar gatherings of the masculine sex in more civilized localities and under more favorable auspices. No glasses were broken in the absence of any; no liquor was uselessly spilled on floor or table in the scarcity of that article.

IT WAS nearly midnight when the festivities were interrupted. "Hush," said Dick Bullen, holding up his hand.

It was the querulous voice of Johnny from his adjacent closet: "Oh, Dad!"

The Old Man arose hurriedly and disappeared in the closet. Presently he reappeared. "His rheumatiz is coming on agin bad," he explained, "and he wants rubbin'." He lifted the demijohn of whisky from the table and shook it. It was empty. Dick Bullen put down his tin cup with an embarrassed laugh. So did the others. The Old Man examined their contents and said, hopefully, "I reckon that's enough; he don't need much. You hold on, all o' you, for a spell, and I'll be back"; and vanished in the closet with an old flannel shirt and the whisky. The door closed but the following dialogue was distinctly audible:

"Now, sonny, whar does she ache worst?"

"Sometimes over yar and sometimes under yer; but it's most powerful from yer to yer. Rub yer, Dad." A silence seemed to indicate a brisk rubbing. Then Johnny: "Hevin' a good time out yer, Dad?"

"Yes, sonny."

"Tomorrer's Chrismiss; ain't it?"

"Yes, sonny. How does she feel now?"

"Better. Rub a little furder down. Wot's Chrismiss, anyway? Wot's it all about?"

"Oh, it's a day."

This exhaustive definition was apparently satisfactory, for there was a silent interval of rubbing. Presently Johnny again:

"Mar sez that everywhere else but yer everybody gives things to everybody Chrismiss, and then she jest waded inter you. She sez thar's a man they call Sandy Claws, not a white man, you know, but a kind o' Chinemin, comes down the chimbley night afore Chrismiss and gives things to chillern—boys like me. Puts 'em in their butes. Thet's what she tried to play upon me. Easy now, Pop, whar are you rubbin' to; thet's a mile from the place. She jest made that up, didn't she, jest to aggrewate me and you? Don't rub thar . . . Why, Dad!"

In the great quiet that seemed to have fallen upon the house the sigh of the near pines and the drip of leaves without were very distinct. Johnny's voice, too, was lowered as he went on: "Don't you take on now, fur I'm gettin' all right fast. Wot's the boys doin' out thar?"

The Old Man partly opened the door and peered through. His guests were sitting there sociably enough, and there were a few silver coins and a lean buckskin purse on the table. "Bettin' on suthin—some little game or 'nother. They're all right," he replied to Johnny, and recommenced his rubbing.

"I'd like to take a hand and win some money," said Johnny, after a pause.

The Old Man glibly repeated what was evidently a familiar formula, that if Johnny would wait until he struck it rich in the tunnel he'd have lots of money, etc., etc.

"Yes," said Johnny, "but you don't. And whether you strike it or I win it, it's about the same. It's all luck. But it's mighty cur'o's about Chrismiss, ain't it? Why do they call it Chrismiss?"

Perhaps from some instinctive deference to the overhearing of his guests, or from some vague sense of incongruity, the Old Man's reply was so low as to be inaudible.

"Yes," said Johnny, with some slight abatement of interest, "I've heard o' *him* before. Thar, that'll do, Dad. I don't ache near so bad as I did. Now wrap me tight in this yer blanket. So. Now," he added in a muffled whisper, "sit down yer by me till I go asleep." To assure himself of obedience, he disengaged one hand from the blanket and, grasping his father's sleeve, again composed himself to rest.

For some moments the Old Man waited patiently. Then the unwonted stillness of the house excited his curiosity, and without moving from the bed, he cautiously opened the door with his disengaged hand, and looked into the main room. To his infinite surprise it was dark and deserted. But even then a smoldering log on the hearth broke, and by the upspringing blaze he saw the figure of Dick Bullen sitting by the dying embers.

"Hello!"

Dick started, rose, and came somewhat unsteadily toward him.

"Whar's the boys?" said the Old Man.

"Gone up the cañon on a little *pasear*. They're coming back for me in a minit. I'm waitin' 'round for 'em. What are you starin' at, Old Man?" he added with a forced laugh. "Do you think I'm drunk?"

The Old Man might have been pardoned the supposition, for Dick's eyes were humid and his face flushed. He loitered and lounged back to the chimney, yawned, shook himself, buttoned up his coat, and laughed. "Liquor ain't so plenty as that, Old Ma Now don't you git up," he continued, as the Old Man made a movement to release his sleeve from Johnny's hand. "Don't you mind manners. Sit jest whar you be; I'm goin' in a jiffy. Thar, that's them now."

There was a low tap at the door. Dick Bullen opened it quickly, nodded good night to his host and disappeared. The Old Man would have followed him but for the hand that still unconsciously grasped his sleeve. He could have easily disengaged it: it was small, weak and emaciated. But perhaps because it *was* small, weak and emaciated, he changed his mind, and, drawing his chair closer to the bed, rested his head upon it. The room flickered and faded before his eyes, reappeared, faded again, went out, and left him—asleep.

MEANTIME Dick Bullen, closing the door, confronted his companions. "Are you ready?" said Staples.

"Ready," said Dick. "What's the time?"

"Past twelve," was the reply.

"Can you make it?—it's nigh on fifty miles, the round trip hither and yon."

"I reckon," returned Dick, shortly. "Whar's the mare?"

"Bill and Jack's holdin' her at the crossin'."

"Let 'em hold on a minit longer," said Dick.

He turned and re-entered the house softly. By the light of the guttering candle and dying fire he saw that the door of the little room was open. He stepped toward it on tiptoe and looked in. The Old Man had fallen back in his chair, snoring, his helpless feet thrust out in a line with his collapsed shoulders, and his hat pulled over his eyes.

Beside him, on a narrow wooden bedstead, lay Johnny, muffled tightly in a blanket that hid all save a strip of forehead and a few curls damp with perspiration. Dick Bullen made a step forward, hesitated, and glanced over his shoulder into the deserted room. Everything was quiet. With a sudden resolution he parted his huge mustaches with both hands and stooped over the sleeping boy. But even as he did so a mischievous blast, lying in wait, swooped down the chimney, rekindled the hearth, and lighted up the room with a glow from which Dick fled in bashful terror.

His companions were already waiting for him at the crossing. Two of them were struggling in the darkness with some strange misshapen bulk, which, as Dick came nearer, took the semblance of a great yellow horse.

It was the mare. She was not a pretty picture. From her Roman nose to her rising haunches, from her arched spine hidden by the stiff *machillas* of a Mexican saddle to her thick, straight, bony legs, there was not a line of equine grace. In her half-blind but wholly vicious white eyes, in her protruding under lip, in her monstrous color, there was nothing but ugliness and vice.

"Now then," said Staples, "stand cl'ar of her heels, boys, and up with you. Don't miss your first holt of her mane, and mind ye get your off stirrup *quick*. Ready!"

THERE was a leap, a scrambling struggle, a bound, a wild retreat of the crowd, a circle of flying hoofs, two springless leaps that jarred the earth, a rapid play and jingle of spurs, a plunge and then the voice of Dick somewhere in the darkness, "All right!"

A splash, a spark struck from the ledge in the road, a clatter in the rocky cut beyond, and Dick was gone.

"I fixed it! I fixed it! You should've tried this one first!"

COLLIER'S DAVE GERARD

Sing, O Muse, the ride of Richard Bullen! Sing, O Muse, of chivalrous men! the sacred quest, the doughty deeds, the battery of low churls, the fearsome ride and grewsome perils of the Flower of Simpson's Bar! Alack! she is dainty, this Muse! She will have none of this bucking brute and swaggering, ragged rider, and I must fain follow him in prose, afoot!

It was one o'clock, and yet he had only gained Rattlesnake Hill. For in that time Jovita had rehearsed to him all her imperfections and practiced all her vices. Thrice had she thrown up her Roman nose in a straight line with the reins, and, resisting bit and spur, struck out madly across country. Twice had she reared, and, rearing, fallen backward; and twice had the agile Dick, unharmed, regained his seat before she found her vicious legs again. And a mile beyond them, at the foot of a long hill, was Rattlesnake Creek.

Dick knew that here was the crucial test of his ability to perform his enterprise, set his teeth grimly, put his knees well into her flanks, and changed his defensive tactics to brisk aggression. Bullied and maddened, Jovita began the descent of the hill. Here the artful Richard pretended to hold her in with ostentatious objurgation and well-feigned cries of alarm.

It is unnecessary to add that Jovita instantly ran away. Nor need I state the time made in the descent; it is written in the chronicles of Simpson's Bar. Enough that in another moment, as it seemed to Dick, she was splashing on the overflowed banks of Rattlesnake Creek. As Dick expected, the momentum she had acquired carried her beyond the point of balking, and, holding her well together for a mighty leap, they dashed into the middle of the swiftly flowing current. A few moments of kicking, wading, and swimming, and Dick drew a long breath on the opposite bank.

The road from Rattlesnake Creek to Red Mountain was tolerably level. Either the plunge in Rattlesnake Creek had dampened her baleful fire, or the art which led to it had shown her the superior wickedness of her rider, for Jovita no longer wasted her surplus energy in wanton conceits. Hollows, ditches, gravelly deposits, patches of freshly springing grasses flew from beneath her rattling hoofs. She began to smell unpleasantly, once or twice she coughed slightly, but there was no abatement of her strength of speed.

By two o'clock he had passed Red Mountain and begun the descent to the plain. At half past two Dick rose in his stirrups with a great shout. Stars were glittering through the rifted clouds, and beyond him, out of the plain, rose two spires, a flagstaff and a straggling line of black objects. Dick jingled his spurs and swung his riata, Jovita bounded forward, and in another moment they swept into Tuttleville and drew up before the wooden piazza of The Hotel of All Nations.

What transpired that night at Tuttleville is not strictly a part of this record. Briefly I may state, however, that after Jovita had been handed over to a sleepy ostler, whom she at once kicked into unpleasant consciousness, Dick sallied out with the barkeeper for a tour of the sleeping town. Lights still gleamed from a few saloons and gambling houses; but, avoiding these, they stopped before several closed shops, and by persistent tapping and judicious outcry roused the proprietors from their beds, and made them unbar the doors.

Sometimes they were met by curses, but oftener by interest and some concern in their needs, and the interview was invariably concluded by a drink. It was three o'clock before this pleasantry was given over, and with a small waterproof bag of India rubber strapped on his shoulders Dick returned to the hotel. But here he was waylaid by Beauty—Beauty opulent in charms, affluent in dress, persuasive in speech, and Spanish in accent! In vain she repeated the invitation in Excelsior, happily scorned by all Alpine-climbing youth, and rejected by this child of the Sierras—a rejection softened in this instance by a laugh and his last gold coin.

And then he sprang to the saddle and dashed down the lonely street and out into the lonelier plain, where presently the lights, the black line of houses, the spires and the flagstaff sank into the earth behind him again and were lost in the distance.

THE storm had cleared away, the air was brisk and cold, the outlines of adjacent landmarks were distinct, but it was half past four before Dick reached the meeting house and the crossing of the county road. To avoid the rising grade he had taken a longer and more circuitous road, in whose viscid mud Jovita sank fetlock deep at every bound. It was a poor preparation for a steady ascent of five miles more; but Jovita, gathering her legs under her, took it with her usual blind, unreasoning fury, and a half hour later reached the long level that led to Rattlesnake Creek. Another half hour would bring him to the creek. He threw the reins lightly upon the neck of the mare, and began to sing.

Suddenly Jovita shied with a bound that would have unseated a less practiced rider. Hanging to her rein was a figure that had leaped from the bank, and at the same time from the road before her arose a shadowy horse and rider. "Throw up your hands," commanded this second apparition.

Dick felt the mare tremble, quiver, and apparently sink under him. He knew him. He knew what it meant and was prepared.

"Stand aside, Jack Simpson! I know you, you d———d thief! Let me pass or—"

He did not finish the sentence. Jovita rose straight in the air with a terrific bound, throwing the figure from her bit with a single shake of her vicious head, and charged with deadly malevolence down on the impediment before her. An oath, a pistol shot, horse and highwayman rolled over in the road, and the next moment Jovita was a hundred yards away. But the good right arm of her rider, shattered by a bullet, dropped helplessly at his side.

Without slacking his speed he shifted the

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Then and Now

By JAMES LEWICKI

Everything has changed in the Christmas kitchen, including the turkey . . .

We've switched from hobbyhorse and tin horn to airplane and atom gun . . .

Family carols are sung around a radio instead of the old upright piano . . .

But despite surface streamlining the Christmas spirit remains the same . . .

reins to his left hand. But a few moments later he was obliged to halt and tighten the saddle girths that had slipped in the onset. This in his crippled condition took some time. He had no fear of pursuit, but looking up he saw that the eastern stars were already paling, and that the distant peaks had lost their ghostly whiteness, and now stood out blackly against a lighter sky. Day was upon him. Then completely absorbed in a single idea, he forgot the pain of his wound, and mounting again dashed on toward Rattlesnake Creek. But now Jovita's breath came broken by gasps, Dick reeled in his saddle, and brighter and brighter grew the sky.

Ride, Richard; run, Jovita; linger, O day!

FOR the last few rods there was a roaring in his ears. Was it exhaustion from loss of blood, or what? He was dazed and giddy as he swept down the hill, and did not recognize his surroundings. Had he taken the wrong road, or was this Rattlesnake Creek?

It was. But the brawling creek he had swam a few hours before had risen, more than doubled its volume, and now rolled a swift and resistless river between him and Rattlesnake Hill. For the first time that night Richard's heart sank within him. The river, the mountain, the quickening east swam before his eyes. He shut them to recover his self-control.

In that brief interval, by some fantastic mental process, the little room at Simpson's Bar and the figures of the sleeping father and son rose upon him. He opened his eyes wildly, cast off his coat, pistol, boots and saddle, bound his precious pack tightly to his shoulders, grasped the bare flanks of Jovita with his bared knees, and with a shout dashed into the yellow water. A cry rose from the opposite bank as the head of a man and horse struggled for a few moments against the battling current, and then were swept away amidst uprooted trees and whirling driftwood.

The Old Man started and woke. The fire on the hearth was dead, the candle in the outer room flickering in its socket, and somebody was rapping at the door. He opened it, but fell back with a cry before the dripping, half-naked figure that reeled against the doorpost.

"Dick?"

"Hush! Is he awake yet?"

"No—but, Dick—?"

"Dry up, you old fool! Get me some whisky *quick!*" The Old Man flew and returned with—an empty bottle! Dick would have sworn, but his strength was not equal to the occasion. He staggered, caught at the handle of the door.

"Thar's suthin' in my pack yer for Johnny. Take it off. I can't."

The Old Man unstrapped the pack and laid it before the exhausted man.

"Open it, quick!"

He did so with trembling fingers. It contained only a few poor toys—cheap and barbaric enough, goodness knows, but bright with paint and tinsel. One of them was broken; another, I fear, was irretrievably ruined by water; and on the third—ah, me! *there was a cruel spot.*

"It don't look like much, that's a fact," said Dick, ruefully, "but it's the best we could do . . . Take 'em, Old Man, and put 'em in his stocking, and tell him—tell him, you know . . . Hold me, Old Man—" The Old *Man caught at his sinking figure.* "*Tell* him—" said Dick, with a weak little laugh, "tell him Sandy Claus has come."

And even so, bedraggled, ragged, unshaven and unshorn, with one arm hanging helplessly at his side, Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar and fell fainting on the first threshold. The Christmas dawn came slowly after, touching the remoter peaks with the rosy warmth of ineffable love. And it looked so tenderly on Simpson's Bar that the whole mountain, as if caught in a generous action, blushed to the skies. THE END

Into the Towns and Across the Border

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

with high prices, shoddy goods and inferior service elsewhere.

Obviously, an important factor in this sudden upsurge was the immediate postwar buying rush which General Wood had foreseen. Just as obviously, this was bound to subside in time, and Sears, Roebuck's 1949 sales probably won't be over $2,000,000,000 when the final figures are toted up. But the company now is so big that a few hundred millions one way or another don't really make a great difference. Sears, Roebuck has grown from a case of watches to one of the world's six biggest businesses, and no man can foretell what lies ahead.

If there's a moral to be found in this growth, it was expressed by a Sears executive who said: "To think that only 10 years ago we still were hearing all that eyewash about America being a 'mature economy' that couldn't grow any more or go anyplace but downhill. Just look what's happened! What a country! And what people in it!"

For the time being, at least, the company's expansion within the U.S. appears to have leveled off from the 1946-'47 peak, and outlay for retail facilities probably will run around $20,000,000 per year. The bulk of this money will not be spent on new stores, since Sears feels that it has pretty well covered the places where it can operate profitably, but on enlarging, relocating and improving existing stores as local conditions warrant.

Outside the U.S., however, Sears is pushing a Latin-American expansion program with a significance far beyond the $12,000,000 invested in it to date. Among the first U.S. merchandisers to attempt major operations in the southern countries, Sears now has stores in Cuba, Mexico and Brazil, and soon will open a new one in Caracas, Venezuela. Ultimately it hopes to have a store in every major Latin-American city, and in time it also hopes to build up a thriving mail-order business, though for a variety of reasons (notably high rates of illiteracy which restrict the use of catalogues) this will develop very slowly.

Already Sears has begun to revolutionize the traditional Latin ways of doing business, and it promises to bring about fundamental improvements in the whole system of production and distribution.

Stores in Panama Recalled

Even more than the original retailing campaign, the Latin-American adventure is almost solely the inspiration of General Wood. It had its beginnings back in the years when he was working with Goethals on the Panama Canal. A demon for efficiency then as now, Wood was outraged by the way stores were run in that part of the world. Prices were exorbitant, stocks meager, service so poor that the simplest transaction took forever. There was no orderly method of distribution and, of course, no uniformity in the price structure. It was customary to haggle over the last penny with a storekeeper who half the time didn't seem to care whether he made a sale or not.

While it would be an exaggeration to say that the general left Panama with a conscious ambition to remedy this state of affairs, it certainly is true that the idea was in the back of his mind. In 1942 he started to do something about it.

In that year Sears opened a small department store in Havana, purely as an experiment to see whether the Latins would patronize an American store run on American lines.

It was an unpropitious time for the experiment, since refrigerators, washing machines, electric fans and similar items soon disappeared for the duration. But even with

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shrunken inventories the Havana store was hugely successful.

The next move was in Mexico, where Sears opened a resplendent establishment in Mexico City. Then came São Paulo and —most recently—Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. Preceded by weeks of ballyhoo and attended by local bigwigs, high brass and church dignitaries, the openings thus far have resembled nothing so much as the Oklahoma land rush. In Mexico City, crowds blocked all streets leading to the store for hours before the doors were due to open, and nearly rioted during the struggle to get inside. The Rio store played to an opening attendance of 123,000 customers (more than 20,000 others couldn't get in at all) who overwhelmed a 100-man police detail, stalled the escalators, cleaned out a stock of 1,000 refrigerators in the first hour, and before closing time bought close to $600,000 worth of goods, for cash. Both in attendance and sales, this was the all-time record for the opening of a single Sears store, in or out of the U.S.

Mexico City provides a good case study of the company's operations below the border and is fairly typical of the merchandising situation throughout Latin America. After an exhaustive survey of the probable lines of growth in the city, Sears in 1945 bought a store site in a quiet part of town, far from the main shopping district and close to the fashionable residential area. Shortages and petty delays stalled construction so that the store wasn't completed until 1947, but in one way this was fortunate, since it enabled Sears to pile up big inventories of goods which scarcely had been seen since before the war.

Prior to the opening, there had been some misgivings that the Mexicans might be so accustomed to bargaining that they wouldn't understand the Sears fixed-price policy. But it turned out that everyone was delighted with the novelty of having quantities of merchandise spread out on open counters, with a price tag on each item.

The store had been running only a short time when the Mexican government clamped an embargo on the importation of many of the goods which Sears inventories, and upped import duties on others by as much as 300 per cent. This was done chiefly to slow down the flow of dollars to the U.S. As a result the company's prices are about 50 per cent higher than in this country. Dollar volume in the Mexico City store is about the same as in the average domestic "A" store, but unit sales are considerably lower.

Despite high prices and the government's efforts to save dollars and protect Mexican industries, the Mexican customers show an overwhelming preference for U.S. goods. Sears carries none of the native products which so appeal to American tourists, because the Mexicans won't buy them.

For example, it stocks a sizable collection of Texas cow boots, but not a single pair of Mexico's inexpensive, infinitely comfortable huarachos. It has nary a rebosa or mantilla, but scads of house and street dresses identical with those worn from Bangor to San Diego. There isn't a machete or a native charcoal burner in the store, but there are shelves of pressure cookers, automatic juicers and stainless-steel cutlery (with jazzy plastic handles). Clientele ranges from barefoot Indians to movie stars, prominent bullfighters, socialites, and even President Alemán and his wife.

A Boost for Native Industry

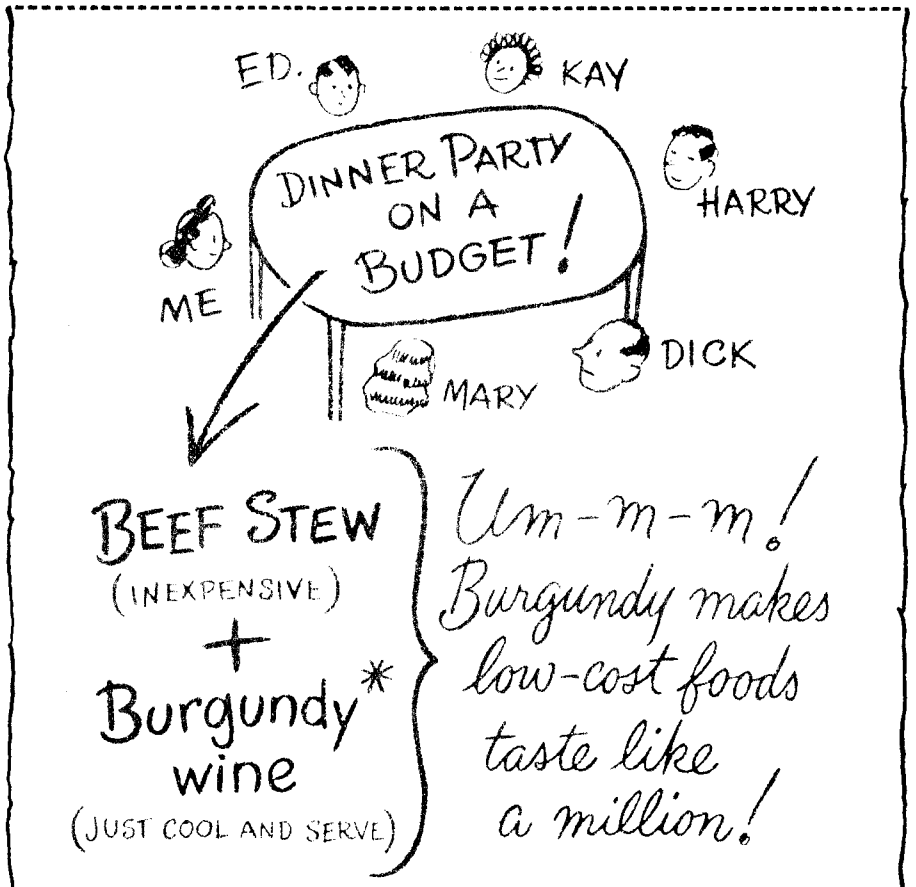
What Sears has done in the way of lowering prices, stimulating competition and introducing modern advertising and merchandising techniques probably is less important to Mexico's economy than the big boost it has given to local production sources. Sears collaborates closely with its U.S. suppliers, and will give them financial and technical assistance in order to get improved products at lower prices. In Mexico it expected to introduce this same policy by degrees, while importing the bulk of its merchandise from the U.S. But the government's action in cutting down imports suddenly made it necessary for Sears to line up a whole network of Mexican suppliers capable of producing goods in large volume to high Sears standards.

At present Sears has about 2,500 Mexican suppliers who probably represent the most efficient and forward-looking sector of the nation's adolescent industry. Some of these companies are wholly owned Sears subsidiaries. Others have been reorganized and refinanced by Sears. Still others have received the guidance of Sears, Roebuck's engineers in setting up production lines, installing new machinery and otherwise modernizing their operations. The result has been a very gradual but perceptible advance toward the level of U.S. technical proficiency.

Sears has no illusions of singlehandedly bringing about a business millennium in Latin America. But it has set the example and pointed the way for the Latins themselves to bring one about, and there are definite signs of progress. What this eventually will mean to our southern neighbors is hard to tell at this stage of the game, but one thing is certain—Sears, Roebuck's enlightened self-interest once more will show a profit. THE END

"You really need a vacation from me, dear. Tell you what—I'll go to Florida for a couple of weeks"

COLLIER'S — BILL KING



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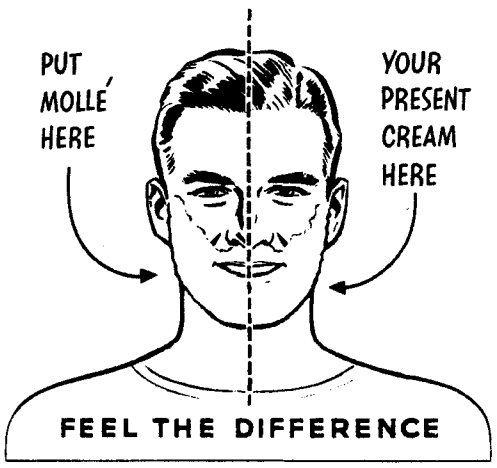

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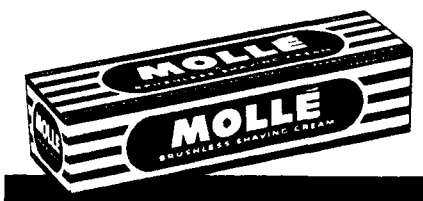

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How Come Christmas?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

mighty old man, too, but de p'int is, how come Christmas git started bein' Christmas? Now who gonter tell me? 'Cause hyar hit is Christmas Day, wid ev'ybody happy and rejoicin' about, and hyar is us, settin' by de stove in de wa'm church house, tawkin' about hit. But ain't nobody got no idee how come hit start bein' Christmas?

WILLIE—You can't fool old Sandy Claus about Christmas. He know, don't he, Revund? He jest lay around and watch and see how de chilluns mind dey maw, and den de fust thing you know he got his mind make up about who been good and who been bad, and den he just hauls off and has hisse'f a Christmas.

CHRISTINE—Yeah, but how come he know hit's time to haul off and have hisse'f a Christmas?

WILLIE—'Cause any time old Sandy Claus make up his mind to have Christmas, well, who gonter stop him?

CHRISTINE—Den how come he don't never make up his mind ontwell de middle er winter? How come he don't make up his mind on de Fou'th er July? Ev'ybody git good around de Fou'th er July, jest like Christmas, so's dey kin go to de picnic. But Sandy Claus ain't payin' no mind to dat cause hit ain't time for Christmas, is hit, Revund?

WILLIE—Cou'se he don't have Christmas on de Fou'th er July. 'Cause hit ain't no p'int in Sandy Claus clawin' ev-ybody when ev'ybody's goin' to de picnic, anyhow. Sandy Claus b'lieve in scatterin' de good stuff out, don't he, Revund? He say, "Well, hit ain't no p'int in me clawin' fo'ks when dey already havin' a good time goin' to de picnic. Maybe I better wait to de dead er winter when hit's too cold for de picnic." Ain't dat right, Revund?

REVEREND—Sandy Claus do b'lieve in scatterin' de good stuff about de seasons, Willie, and hit sho ain't no p'int in havin' Christmas on de Fou'th er July. 'Cause de Fou'th er July is got hit's own p'int. And who gonter tell me what de p'int er de Fou'th er July is?

CHORUS—
Old Gawge Wash'n'ton whupped de kaing,
And de eagle squalled, Let Freedom raing.

REVEREND—Dat's right. And dat was in de summertime, so ev'ybody went out and had a picnic 'cause dey was so glad dat Gawge Wash'n'ton whupped dat kaing. Now what's de p'int er Christmas?

WILLIE—Old Sandy Claus . . .

CHRISTINE—De Poor Little Jesus . . .

REVEREND—Well, hit seem like old Sandy Claus and de Poor Little Jesus bofe is mixed up in dis thing, f'm de way y'all chilluns looks at hit. And I reckon y'all is just about zackly right too. 'Cause dat's how hit is. Bofe of 'em is so mixed up in hit I can't tell which is which, hardly.

DELIA—Was dat before de Fou'th er July?

CHRISTINE—Cou'se hit was. Don't Christmas always come before de Fou'th er July?

WILLIE—Naw, suh. Hit's de Fou'th er July fust, and den hit's Christmas. Ain't dat right, Revund?

REVEREND—I b'lieve Christine got you dat time, Willie. Christmas do come before de Fou'th er July. 'Cause you see hit was at Christmas when old Gawge Wash'n'ton got mad at de kaing 'cause de kaing was gonter kill de Poor Little Jesus. And him and de kaing fit f'm Christmas to de Fou'th er July before Gawge Wash'n'ton finally done dat kaing up.

WILLIE—And Gawge Wash'n'ton whupped dat kaing, didn't he?

REVEREND—He whupped de stuffin' outn him. He whupped him f'm Balmoral to Belial and den back again. He jest done dat kaing up so bad dat he jest natchally put kaingin' outn style, and ev'y since den, hit ain't been no more kaings to 'mount to much.

You see, kaings was bad fo'ks. Dey was mean. Dey'd druther kill you den leave you alone. You see a kaing wawkin' down de road, and you better light out across de field, 'cause de kaing would wawk up and chop yo' haid off. And de law couldn't tetch him, 'cause he was de kaing.

So all de fo'ks got skeered er de kaing, 'cause dey didn't know how to do nothin' about hit. So ev'ybody went around, tryin' to stay on de good side of him. And all er dat is how come de Poor Little Jesus and old Sandy Claus got mixed up wid gettin' Christmas goin'.

You see, one time hit was a little baby bawned name' de Poor Little Jesus, but didn't nobody know dat was his name yit. Dey knew he was a powerful smart and powerful purty little baby, but dey didn't know his name was de Poor Little Jesus. So, 'cause he was so smart and so purty, ev'ybody thought he was gonter grow up and be de kaing.

COLLIER'S

"Close the door, dear. You'll find out what that is on Christmas morning"

ROBERT DAY

So quick as dat news got spread around, ev'ybody jest about bust to git on de good side er de baby, 'cause dey figure efn dey start soon enough he'd grow up likin' 'em and not chop dey haids off.

So old Moses went over and give him a hund'ed dollars in gold. And old Methuselah went over and give him a diamond ring. And old Peter give him a fine white silk robe.

And ev'ybody was runnin' in wid fine presents so de Poor Little Jesus wouldn't grow up and chop de haids off.

Ev'ybody but old Sandy Claus. Old Sandy Claus was kind er old and didn't git around much, and he didn't hyar de news dat de Poor Little Jesus was gonter grow up and be de kaing. So him and de old lady was settin' back by de fire one night, toastin' dey shins and tawkin' about dis and dat, when old Miz Sandy Claus up and remark, she say, "Sandy, I hyars Miss Mary got a brand-new baby over at her house."

"Is dat a fack?" says Sandy Claus. "Well, well, hit's a might cold night to do anything like dat, ain't hit? But on de yuther hand, he'll be a heap er pleasure and fun for her next summer I reckon."

So de tawk went on, and finally old Sandy Claus remark dat hit was powerful lonesome around de house since all er de chilluns growed up and married off.

"Dey all married well," say Miz Sandy Claus, "and so I say, 'Good ruddance.' You ain't never had to git up and cyore dey colic and mend dey clothes, so you gittin' lonesome. Me, I love 'em all, but I'm glad dey's married and doin' well."

So de tawk run on like dat for a while, and den old Sandy Claus got up and got his hat. "I b'lieve," he say, "I'll drap over and see how dat baby's gittin' along. I ain't seed no chillun in so long I'm pyore hongry to lean my eyes up agin a baby."

"You ain't goin' out on a night like dis, is you?" say Miz Sandy Claus.

"Sho I'm goin' out on a night like dis," say Sandy Claus. "I'm pyore cravin' to see some chilluns."

"But hit's snowin' and goin' on," say Miz Sandy Claus. "You know yo' phthisic been devilin' you, anyhow, and you'll git de chawley mawbuses sloppin' around in dis weather."

"No mind de tawk," say Sandy Claus. "Git me my umbrella and my overshoes. And you better git me a little somethin' to take along for a cradle gift, too, I reckon."

"You know hit ain't nothin' in de house for no cradle gift," say Miz Sandy Claus.

"Git somethin'," say Sandy Claus. "You got to give a new baby somethin', or else you got bad luck. Git me one er dem big red apples outn de kitchen."

"What kind er cradle gift is an apple?" say Miz Sandy Claus. "Don't you reckon dat baby git all de apples he want?"

"Git me de apple," say Sandy Claus. "Hit ain't much, one way you looks at hit. But f'm de way dat baby gonter look at de apple, hit'll be a heap."

So Sandy Claus got de apple and he lit out.

Well, when he got to Miss Mary's house ev'ybody was standin' around givin' de Poor Little Jesus presents. Fine presents. Made outn gold and silver and diamonds and silk, and all like dat. Dey had de presents stacked around dat baby so high you couldn't hardly see over 'em. So when ev'ybody seed old Sandy Claus come in dey looked to see what he brang. And when dey seed he didn't brang nothin' but a red apple, dey all laughed.

"Quick as dat boy grows up and gits to be de kaing," dey told him, "he gonter chop yo' haid off."

"No mind dat," say Sandy Claus. "Y'all jest stand back." And so he went up to de crib and he pushed away a handful er gold and silver and diamonds and stuff, and handed de Poor Little Jesus dat red apple. "Hyar, son," he say, "take dis old apple. See how she shines?"

And de Poor Little Jesus reached up and grabbed dat apple in bofe hands, and laughed jest as brash as you please!

Den Sandy Claus tuck and tickled him under de chin wid his before finger, and say, "Goodly-goodly-goodly."

And de Poor Little Jesus laughed some more and he reached up and grabbed a fist full er old Sandy Claus' whiskers, and him and old Sandy Claus went round and round!

So about dat time, up stepped de Lawd. "I swear, old Sandy Claus," say de Lawd. "Betwixt dat apple and dem whiskers, de Poor Little Jesus ain't had so much fun since he been bawn."

So Sandy Claus stepped back and bowed low and give de Lawd hy-dy, and say, "I didn't know ev'ybody was chivareein', or else I'd a stayed at home. I didn't had nothin' much to bring dis time, 'cause you see how hit's been dis year. De dry weather and de bull weevils got mighty nigh all de cotton, and de old lady been kind er puny—"

"Dat's all right, Sandy," say de Lawd. "Gold and silver have I a heap of. But verily you sho do know how to handle yo'se'f around de chilluns."

"Well, Lawd," say Sandy Claus, "I don't know much about chilluns. Me and de old lady raised up fou'teen. But she done most er de work. Me, I jest likes 'em and I manages to git along wid 'em."

"You sho do git along wid 'em good," say de Lawd.

"Hit's easy to do what you likes to do," say Sandy Claus.

"Well," say de Lawd, "hit might be somethin' in dat, too. But de trouble wid my world is, hit ain't enough people which likes to do de right thing. But you likes to do wid chilluns, and dat's what I needs. So stand still and shet yo' eyes whilst I passes a miracle on you."

So Sandy Claus stood still and shet his eyes, and de Lawd r'ared back and passed a miracle on him and say, "Old Sandy Claus, live forever, and make my chilluns happy."

So Sandy Claus opened his eyes and say, "Thank you kindly, Lawd. But do I got to keep 'em happy all de time? Dat's a purty big job. Hit'd be a heap er fun, but still and at de same time—"

"Yeah, I knows about chilluns, too," say de Lawd. "Chilluns got to fret and git in devilment ev'y now and den and git a whuppin' f'm dey maw, or else dey skin won't git loose so's dey kin grow. But you jest keep yo' eyes on 'em and make 'em all happy about once a year. How's dat?"

"Dat's fine," say Sandy Claus. "Hit'll be a heap er fun, too. What time er de year you speck I better make 'em happy, Lawd?"

"Christmas suit me," say de Lawd, "efn hit's all okay wid you."

"Hit's jest about right for me," say old Sandy Claus.

So ev'y since dat day and time old Sandy Claus been clawin' de chilluns on Christmas, and dat's on de same day dat de Poor Little Jesus got bawned. 'Cause dat's de way de Lawd runs things. O' cou'se de Lawd knowed hit wa'n't gonter be long before de Poor Little Jesus growed up and got to be a man. And when he done dat, all de grown fo'ks had him so's dey c'd moan they sins away and lay they burdens down on him, and git happy in they hearts. De Lawd made Jesus for de grown fo'ks. But de Lawd know de chilluns got to have some fun, too, so dat's how come it's Sandy Claus and Christmas and all. THE END

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Well, A Little More Time...

By BOB CONSIDINE

HE HAD grown a bit older through the nearly 2,000 years. And He had been working too hard. The phones had been going night and day, for centuries, and there were millions of newcomers He hadn't been able to meet as yet.

His mother, of course, was the first to notice the few gray hairs around His temples. Quietly, but firmly, she suggested that He get away for a spell, and just before His birthday He decided it might be a pretty good suggestion, at that. He went to the window of His study one clear night and looked things over, trying to pick a vacation spot.

There were more than 30,000,000,000 worlds to tempt Him. All these, of the countless billions more, had passed through the trying years of war and want and had settled down to a point where peace had become an estate much more exciting to their peoples than war. He mulled over which of them He would visit, for He had not been to any of them for a time. But then a distant memory stirred itself and, searching the enormous oval of the littered sky, He found a tiny, luminous cinder amid an obscure constellation. And after a bit He remembered its name: Earth.

When He announced that He had chosen that forgotten place for His vacation, His mother was a bit vexed.

"The hotel situation is bad there," she reminded him. "Don't you remember we had some trouble getting reservations?"

He laughed a little, in His kindly way, and assured her that nearly 2,000 years can make a lot of changes in man's hostility to man. She walked away, wondering, and pretty soon Michael, an enormous archangel, with a handsome face and the wingspread of a B-29, came up to Him and sat down.

"I heard you're going on a trip," Michael the Archangel said. "I'll drive you down. And get you back in a jiffy."

"No, thanks, Michael," He said. "I'll get down all right. And besides, I've been wanting to try some of the transportation down there. Primitive, isn't it?"

And so, on the morning before Christmas, He arrived in New York City, bought some new clothes, took a look around the town, then caught an air liner. He got off at a fashionable winter resort and applied for a room at a nice hotel.

The man behind the desk looked Him over carefully and shook his head. All booked, the man said. At the next hotel, the desk clerk said the same thing, and at the next and the next. But the doorman of the last place seemed to take a little pity on Him and suggested that He inquire at a place where a lot of young men, bachelors, mainly, seemed to stay.

They were nice to Him there, especially the lady in charge. She said that the town's hostesses and hosts had just about emptied her place looking for extra men to fill in at the numerous holiday parties being held. And would He please tidy up in a hurry? He did, and was happy when the lady in charge said He too had been invited to a party. It would give Him a chance, He felt, to get to know the descendants of those for whom He had undergone certain hardships.

It was a grand party, and He found it stimulating. Nobody caught His name, but He passed that off as one of the idiosyncrasies of this odd little planet. The talk was fine: certain political events had bestirred the men; certain fashion events, the women.

He joined in and found it rather easy to hold His own, for people had talked much like that when He was around the last time. Everybody at the party loved His fairness and easy wit.

Everything would have gone nicely, He supposed later, if the talk had not turned to "Where are you from?"

They were from an interesting variety of places, He found; places that had sprung up during the split second of the last two or three centuries. He was charmed by the pride they held in their home towns, their schools, their clubs, and the like. Then just before the party was to move on to the exclusive Wampum Club for dinner, He realized that somebody was asking Him the question.

"I was born in Bethlehem," He said. "It's a small place."

"Bethlehem?" His host repeated. "Been there many times, when I was in steel. Fine town!"

"Then we moved on to a town named Nazareth, and finally to Jerusalem."

He didn't notice, for a moment, that a heavy silence had fallen on the room.

The host was the first to recover, boomed for another round of drinks for the other guests, and then took the Stranger by the arm and escorted Him to a quiet corner of the living room.

"Don't mean to be personal, old man," he said, "but you say you were born in Bethlehem . . . moved to Nazareth . . . then Jerusalem?"

"Yes," He said wonderingly.

"What's your profession?"

He thought a bit, then smiled. "I was a carpenter for a time. Then I sort of went on the road, as you say."

"Salesman?"

He thought that over for a time. "Yes, in a way."

"We thought you were a writer, from the beard . . ."

He shook His head. "No, I never got around to that. But I used to talk now and then."

The host thought things over for a long time. "Well," he said, finally, "I hope you won't be offended by this, but we've got to face facts here. Are you Jewish?"

"Yes." He smiled.

The host wheezed again. "Facts," he said, "have to be faced. We were counting on you being an extra man at the dinner at the Wampum. But, I'm sorry, it can't be done. There's a rule, see? Don't blame me, I didn't make it. It's just a rule. If I bring you, and they find it out, I'll be asked to resign from the club. It's the oldest and best club around here, and we've got to live here, see? I hope you understand."

"Understand? Why, yes, I guess I do. You've already been quite kind to me . . ."

"Not at all. Not at all. You're interesting. I like your manner. But this is one of those things I can't buck."

The host's wife hovered behind them. "We're late, Horace," she reminded him. "You know how they are about holding tables, especially on Christmas Eve."

The guests crowded out on the curb in happy confusion and piled into their convertibles and the chauffeur-driven cars. The sweet sound of racing motors filled the soft night. The host stayed behind, momentarily, and put his arm around the Visitor's shoulders.

"No hard feelings?" the man asked.

"No hard feelings," He answered warmly.

"Well . . . I got to get along. Nice of you to drop in." The host stepped into his own convertible and roared off.

The Stranger stood for a moment on the curb of the now-darkened street. The air was tender in the palms, and it reminded Him vaguely of the palms He had known as a Child, and the palms He had known for one brief Sunday as a Man. He thought for a long time, reflectively. Well, a little more time . . . Then He chuckled a bit—or was it a sigh? —and clapped on His new hat.

Then He looked up at the star-studded night and cupped His hands around His sensitive mouth.

"Michael!" He shouted at the top of His lungs. "Oh, Michael!"

THE END

Bob Considine, long-time columnist for International News Service, has turned out movie scripts too, in addition to several books—some under his own byline and others ghosted—including the wartime best seller Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo and, more recently, The Babe Ruth Story. This year he added to his honors by winning the Catholic Writers Guild Golden Book Award, and the first annual award offered by the members of the Catholic Institute of the Press

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Mr. Busby

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 58

the house, I saw that the whole rabbit colony was in our back yard, sharing their rescuer's supply of cut grass and vegetables. To the rabbits Busby was the Messiah, and their obvious devotion was enough to convict him.

Mistaken though he was, I admired Busby's liberty-loving courage. Yet the whole affair was awkward, even though the usually formal major and his boy seemed to take the matter in good part as we threw an amateur dragnet around the neighborhood to reclaim the rabbits.

WE ROUNDED up most of the escapees in the next 24 hours, and in the days that followed the Applebys were aided by well-meaning friends who called up at all hours to report strays on distant properties.

I gladly underwrote the expense of repairing the rabbit house, and in the survey of damages the mystery of Busby's access to the outside world was explained. Well hidden by our hydrangea bushes was a series of holes drilled through the fence to neighboring yards.

I never knew how far Busby's nocturnal patrol might extend. However, none of us was astonished by news of the "liberation" of an entire run of prize Minorcas on a property several blocks away. Since the keeping of even blooded fowl was contrary to the restrictions of the neighborhood, Busby's popularity rose rather than fell with the weight of suspicion.

In time these peccadilloes of Busby's were forgiven and seemingly forgotten. Then a neighbor's front steps suddenly collapsed beneath their owner. The weakness of the structure had not been suspected until one morning our neighbor stepped down from his porch and skidded into a rose bush. Subsequent research beneath the porch revealed that the studs carrying the risers had been gnawed in two.

I had to face the facts; Busby was a behavior problem. I could understand and condone his rebellious sympathy for the rabbits and the chickens. But this last act was outright vandalism. Evidently Busby could not be trusted with his freedom.

Yet when I shut him in the greenhouse I could not face him. He acknowledged no guilt, he was a martyr. If any of us approached he ignored us. He would hardly touch his food and soon he looked so thin and dejected I took him to a veterinarian. The checkup was a success. Save for a slight excess of white corpuscles, Busby was in perfect physical condition. His trouble must be emotional!

A young friend of ours, a university student, was writing a thesis on the mental reactions of animals, and he came through with a helpful suggestion at this point. There was nothing wrong with Busby, he said. Without wood to gnaw on, a beaver's teeth would grow too long to use and he would starve to death. Choosing the seclusion of the porch was a symptom of inferiority. Otherwise, he was normal but he was being handled unintelligently. I was his real problem. A beaver is pre-eminently creative and industrious and must express himself. Busby was being frustrated.

Relieved, I immediately made arrangements with our city street department to furnish Busby with a regular supply of tree trimmings. With the first load, Busby was a new beaver.

Every morning after his regular swim he would go straight to his woodyard and strip the twigs and tender bark from the larger limbs, getting his day's work ready. Out of condition, Busby was slower than the average beaver, yet on the first day he gnawed his way through a three-inch log in half an hour. By afternoon the yard was cluttered with logs.

I stacked Busby's work with my own hands, for I wanted him to realize its value. When seasoned, of course, it would be excellent firewood. But there was a drawback. Like campfire wood, it was irregular in length and very little of it would fit our fireplace. Busby had no conception of precision work.

At breakfast a few days later I saw the answer to this problem. Taking the sirup cruet with me, I went out to Busby's shop. I crossed a number of logs with a generous trickle of maple sirup at the proper intervals. The result was perfect. Sinking into the wood the new flavor made it attractive to Busby at just the right places and he practically cut the logs to order. Later, instead of the cruet, I used a slender brush. It was more accurate. In a few minutes I could lay out enough work to last Busby several days.

But I really valued the new system for a better reason. It was a means of understanding between Busby and me. I knew the time would come when he would tire of unskilled wood chopping. It offered no real scope to a beaver's constructive imagination, which in the wilds would have been concerned with building dams and canals for floating logs to their projects.

WORKING steadily as he did for long hours, Busby soon had cut enough firewood to last through the winter. I decided the time had come to develop him into a self-sufficient craftsman.

For my experiment a friend sent me some tree sections of the Oregon myrtle. I saturated the center of one of the slabs with sirup and turned it over to Busby. In a surprisingly short time he had gouged it out into a shallow receptacle. I primed it again and he deepened it. Then I turned it over and brushed it around the edge.

Busby followed my outline faithfully and the result was a crude but recognizable salad bowl.

I took it from Busby to show him it was finished. Later at his house I formally presented it to him. He studied it with evident pride, taking an occasional nibble here and there to shape it up. Even after I served his supper of beaver salad in it he would often pause to admire his handiwork.

Busby's surprising success as a wood carver gave him new confidence and he was eager to start his second bowl. Although a master of crude, bold carving, he had a sense of form and would walk around his work, truing it up with an almost delicate precision. The finished bowl was so attractive that I decided to take it to a local gift shop to have it sanded and polished.

Mr. Winstrom, the proprietor, was enchanted by Busby's carving. He would not only purchase all of Busby's work but offered a most practical suggestion. Instead of wasting so much time on the laborious hollowing out of each bowl, we would have the mill rout out the blanks so Busby could give all his time to the exterior, where his craftsmanship showed best. This would double production and help sales, since fastidious hostesses might not appreciate Busby's tooth marks next to the salad.

Myrtle bowls individually carved by a beaver proved to be a mild sensation in the gift trade. Mr. Winstrom, who had the exclusive sales rights, created a little forest scene in his store window showing the progress of Busby's work from the rough to the polished product. Reluctantly I was persuaded to let Busby make a personal appearance. That attracted a lot of attention but was not a complete success. Disturbed by his incarceration, Busby shrank from people, especially those who insisted on shaking hands. He bumped his nose when he tried to make a getaway through the plate-glass window. He even tried to bite his way out.

He finally escaped from the window and wandered about the store. Intrigued by the scent of a priceless sandalwood chest, Busby sampled a fair-sized portion of one corner of it. Fortunately, Mr. Winstrom was philosophical about the matter and generously conceded that Busby attracted enough business to the store to pay for the damaged heirloom.

"Bowls by Busby," as they were labeled, proved to be good Christmas sellers, and Busby soon was earning ample pin money for his two favorite luxury items, apples and slippery elm sticks. And after we enlarged his swimming pool he thoroughly enjoyed his new raft, slide and springboard.

As Busby gained recognition in the trade,

COLLIER'S

"This is very nice of you, Ralph. I don't know what Helen would do if I told her I was sitting up with a sick friend"

JEFF KEATE

COLLIER'S

"Did you notice that beautiful new fur coat of hers? It's going to cost you a pretty penny to get me one better than it!"

WILLIAM VON RIEGEN

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Mr. Winstrom shrewdly tried to buy him from me at a fabulous price. I learned afterward he had planned to get a number of beavers and train them at bowlmaking, with Busby as foreman. Recognizing it as a beaver sweatshop, I was glad I had never divulged the all-important secret of the sirup brush, which to Busby was as indispensable as the blueprint to a skilled mechanic.

As the most prominent beaver in the state, it was not surprising that Busby was invited to the opening of the Boy Scouts' new headquarters. At the same time they elected him to a special honorary membership as mascot and a sort of patron saint. His induction ceremony was slightly marred by a youthful scout who decided to share his bubble gum with the guest of honor.

Busby worked determinedly on the new substance and his alternate efforts to chew and swallow were more diverting to the audience than the flattering words of the chairman.

Finally, his patience at an end, Busby rid himself of his problem by plastering it on the vacant seat of the speaker, a circumstance that became generally known later in the evening.

Except for such special occasions, all days were the same to Busby, and he did not observe the Sabbath. That fact might have aroused no criticism if his work had not diverted children on their way to Sunday school. But with a popular church at the end of our block, and many children passing our house, that was bound to happen. Sunday-school tardiness soon became a major problem.

A possible solution was for us to interest Busby in going to church. It would be difficult, for to a well-brought-up beaver there is only one virtue—industry. Fortunately Busby was extremely sociable, and we decided to try to turn that side of his nature to our end.

Sundays, as an experiment, I had our youngest daughter take Busby for a stroll as far as the church, always returning in time to reach her Sunday-school class as usual. Busby could walk erect as well as on all fours and when he was mingling with the young people he preferred to do so, although when he was with adults he was sensitive about his short stature. The picture of Busby, his tail dragging like an oversized evening coat, and walking to Sunday school hand in hand with our youngster frequently made the Sunday supplements.

SOME of the children came early for the privilege of walking with Busby. One small girl, carried away with the importance of her company, led him through the vestry and into the classroom before the surprised sexton caught up with them and shooed Busby out the side door.

Short as the visit was, it apparently fascinated Busby. To anyone who knew him, his backward glance as Mr. Petty ushered him out was as significant as General MacArthur's, "I will return."

No sooner had Busby been led back to his home than he scurried along a shortcut to the church and took his stand at the front door to crash the services under cover of the late arrivals. Mr. Petty, however, had taken his stand at the front door, blocking the way of the new convert.

But only for the time. The approach of the Christmas season increased the activity at the church. Through his keen ears and nostrils Busby sensed the approaching holiday with the arrival of a beautiful silver pine so large it required Mr. Petty and two men to carry it into the assembly room. He was enthralled by the fragrance of the tree, the laughter of the young people and, above all, the sound of the choir practice.

Surveying the church building, hoping for an entrance not known to the ubiquitous Mr. Petty, Busby came upon an encouraging-looking opening beneath the upper end of the back stairs. He made his discovery at the time of the choir's last practice for the Sunday before Christmas. The committee on arrangements in the assembly hall was decorating the tree with holly, lights and tinsel.

It was raining and Busby was dripping wet as he enlarged the opening beneath the building. As he worked he was reassured by a small ray of light ahead of him. The vibrations of the organ and the singing of O Come, All Ye Faithful were like a personal summons.

The new opening led directly into the organ loft. Busby's path took him along the unlighted space between Miss Hackett, the organist, and the big instrument itself. Miss Hackett was soulfully absorbed in the sacred music, never dreaming that a wet beaver was about to swish past her ankles. The choir voices were strong and clear. Suddenly the organ music stopped—because Miss Hackett had fainted.

Busby, modestly unaware of his part in events, loped down the dark narrow stairs and on toward the Christmas tree. He was just in time to meet a slightly hysterical onrush of first-aiders headed for the choir loft. As a consequence they stumbled over a damp beaver.

Mr. Petty, summoned to the scene, was in neither a Yuletide nor even a Christian mood. Throwing a small rug over the tooth end of Busby as a temporary health and accident precaution, the sexton bore the offender to the door and eliminated him from the scene with the finality of a professional bouncer.

BUSBY was humiliated and disillusioned. He had believed his first expulsion was a personal matter between him and Mr. Petty. But from the cold indifference of the witnesses to this second experience, he now realized that beavers were not welcome in church.

Discrimination was new to him. He had been generally accepted both in his business relations with Mr. Winstrom and in his cordial welcome by the Boy Scouts. His one-day visit to the neighboring school had been such an outstanding social triumph that the principal had had to terminate it.

Busby's nature harbored no racial or class distinction. If a place was closed to one it should be closed to all. . . .

When Mr. Petty reached the church a trifle late the next morning and some of the churchgoers arrived a little early for Sunday service they were confronted with a fairly good replica of a beaver dam piled up against the church door.

As our family was promptly informed, it was constructed of our winter's supply of firewood supplemented by such suitable materials as could be found in neighboring back yards.

The situation was inconvenient but no too serious. Divested of his frock coat, Mr Petty was soon able to burrow down to the level of the door's keyhole and open the side door for the churchgoers until he could clear the main passageway through the debris.

The easiest out for me was to present the logs to the church for the assembly fireplace. The most difficult thing to decide was what to do about Busby. I had introduced him into a world that would not accept him.

DESPITE his rebuff, Busby clung pathetically to the spirit of Christmas. The next two days he kept a lonely watch from our lawn as an occasional wagon stopped to deliver a Christmas tree to a neighbor's home. Toward the end he would even cut across our lawn and escort the trees to their destination, vainly trying to lead them to our house. When the last delivery proved conclusively there was no tree for our family Busby was definitely depressed.

I regretted that, for the first time, we were not celebrating Christmas at home and had not ordered a tree. However, we hurriedly purchased a small evergreen and set it up in Busby's house. We filled an improvised beaver stocking with nuts, apples and maple sugar and hung it low enough for his reach.

Although temporarily buoyed up by our little ceremony, Busby was still brooding and when he followed us back to the house we realized his mood was not self-pity. He felt sorry for us. We, his benefactors, were also the objects of discrimination and would have no Christmas tree.

As the next day was to be a full one we retired early and I, at least, awoke earlier than I had planned. Just at dawn, in my room almost above the front porch, I could hear a loud scraping on the steps to the front door. I was puzzled, for it was far too late for any delivery service and far too early for any sincere well-wisher. Also, it was too much of a commotion to be ignored.

In my heavy robe I hurried downstairs and threw open the door. I was in anything but a merry Christmas mood. And there was Busby, standing erect, looking into my eyes with a glow of fervor and triumph. Somehow, I too was deeply stirred by the meeting. I felt like stooping over and taking him in my arms, but he was plainly directing my attention to the object beneath him—his Christmas offering to the family.

In the growing light my eyes focused and I could see it more clearly—the most beautiful Christmas tree I had ever beheld. It should have been—it was Major Appleby's thousand-dollar Himalayan cypress. THE END

COLLIER'S "Stores crowded, hey? Don't blame you for being tired. When's dinner?" DICK WANG

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A Matter of Principle

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

"I thought I'd maybe cut it down for Lou Ellen."

"Why?"

"She's got a young man."

Flagg bolted up, the new teacher blasted out of his thoughts. "We just had one to get married last summer. We can't let Lou Ellen go."

"She's of an age."

"You tell her I said when it's fit for her to get married I'll let her know." He wriggled back under the blankets.

"I'll tell her," Ada agreed. She stood over the bed, shivering. "Ben's got Molly a 'lectric heater."

Flagg grunted.

"Molly says Ben's got more work than he can handle. He needs a working partner."

"I ain't working for Ben, if thas what you're driving at."

"Much as we need the money . . ."

"Ben's a man of no principle."

Ada turned down her side of the bed. The sheet felt icy to the touch. "Molly says she puts her heater by the bed and it hottens up the whole room."

Flagg smiled craftily. "And did Molly say anything 'bout that man in town got hissef 'lectrocuted on one of them things?"

"No." Ada glanced down at him curiously, as though about to trip him. "Funny I didn't see nothing in the papers 'bout it."

"Papers!" Flagg snorted. "You don't reckon the papers'd print it, not when the 'lectric people own 'em all." He lay quiet for a moment, then edged over in the bed with a smile that was almost like the old days when they were first going out together. "I'll warm your side the bed."

Ada was asleep when Flagg, who had threshed things out in his mind with the new teacher, finally leaned over to turn out the coal-oil lamp on the bedside table he'd made from the packing box in which Ben's radio had been crated. He frowned.

"Ada." He nudged her and she moaned sleepily. "Ada, honey, you forgot somep'n."

"Huh?" She rolled over, hugging the blankets to her chin.

"My glass of water."

"Couldn't you manage without it?"

"I might wake up in the night thirsty."

"You never do."

"But I might."

Ada slipped out into the cold, wincing at the touch of the floor to her bare feet. Flagg, from the depth of his blanket warmth, called after her:

"Ada, honey, just half a glass'll do."

FLAGG was up early next morning, almost before Ada had got her fire made in the kitchen. He dressed by the cookstove, then stood over the kitchen table, restless and edgy. He pawed at his fat back and fried potatoes and drank three cups of black coffee. When the older children came timidly to the first table—the family ate in two shifts, after Flagg was through—he told them to wait, he hadn't finished his breakfast yet.

"They've got to meet the school bus," Lou Ellen said.

She filled their plates while Ada shrank into the corner, waiting for the lightning to strike. Flagg began to roll a cigarette. He was muttering to himself. He always grew irritable and snappish when he was about to break in a new teacher. Lou Ellen glanced across the table at her mother, as though to remind her of something she had forgotten to do. Ada swallowed hard.

"Wood box is empty," she said.

"Fill it," Flagg said.

"It ain't up to me to fill it."

"Tell the boys to do it."

"They got school to go to."

"Well, when they come home."

Ada looked helplessly at Lou Ellen, who smiled and nodded encouragingly. "I was just thinking 'bout your dinner," Ada said. "I won't have a stick of firewood."

Flagg stormed up from his chair. He began to pace, stopping abruptly to frown at a small red-haired boy who had spilled apple butter down his front. "That ain't one of ourn."

"Thas Cousin Laura's youngest," Ada said, then lowered her voice. "She's expecting."

"Tell him I said to keep hissef quiet round here."

"He's a good li'l fellow," Ada said.

The child began to cry.

"There's somep'n else," Ada said, after Lou Ellen had prodded her with another bolstering smile. "A Christmas tree."

"Trees ain't meant for the house."

"The children want it."

"It's contrary to the laws of nature. Tell 'em I said so."

HE PUT on a necktie and greased back his hair. He bundled up in the Mackinaw Ben had given him two winters ago. He wore his corduroy cap with the ear flaps. He opened the door and shooed the children out ahead of him, so they'd cut a path to the road. They waited by the mailbox, and when Otey Hartsook dragged the school bus to a stop in the drifted snow, the Purdy children clambered in the back door. Otey rolled down his window. "Can't take passenger, Flagg. Sorry."

"You can take me."

"Only kids. It's the law."

Flagg shouldered his way into the back of the yellow bus, clearing a seat with a swipe of his hand. "You'n me are both of us going to the schoolhouse," he said. "The law don't intend for you to ride and me to walk." He closed the door.

The seats ran the length of the bus, so that the children sat facing one another across a narrow aisle. They smelled of kitchen soap and damp wool, and their mittened hands clutched books, apples and lunchboxes. They whispered, squirmed, giggled and wrote their names in the window mist. They edged away from Flagg, who sat talking in his head to the new teacher. When the bus bounced up to the schoolhouse, he started toward the door, muttering: ". . . and just so's you get off on the right . . ."

Flagg was halfway to the school-bus door when a bell rang and he was caught in a sudden welter of scrambling feet and flailing arms. He went down, deafened by the squealing laughter, trampled by wet boots. A knee caught his temple, a damp skirt brushed his face, an apple fell on his head. Sputtering, he wriggled to his feet and groped toward the open doorway of the bus, where a young man stood, smiling at him.

"Are you hurt?" the young man said.

"Manners," Flagg said. "Kids ain't learned any manners."

He had to stoop to get out of the bus. It was hard to keep any dignity all hunched over, especially when the other man was standing up straight and probably laughing out the side of his face. Flagg couldn't remember when he'd met a man he'd taken such a dislike to on sight.

"I come to see the new teacher," Flagg said when he got outside.

The young man smiled again. "I'm the new teacher."

"But—" Flagg stumbled back. "Always before it's been lady teachers."

"They figured it was a man's job." The young man offered his hand and Flagg shook it weakly. He didn't know what else to do. "I'm Al Harlan," the young man said. "Is there anything I can do for you, Mr. Purdy?"

"Know who I am, huh?" Flagg said, "Of course, I can see the resemblance to Lou Ellen."

"How come you to know Lou Ellen?"

"We're getting married next week."

The school bell stopped ringing, and they could hear the rumpus sounds of the children inside. The young man bowed, with that aggravating smile. "I wish we had time to talk things over, Mr. Purdy, but I'm afraid I'll have to go in now." Flagg stood staring after him. The schoolhouse noise stopped abruptly, like a small fire snuffed out with a blanket. Flagg turned slowly and stumbled toward home.

All morning he sat in the front room, not making a sound, not even when ten o'clock went by without Ada bringing him his glass of sweet milk and his corn bread and apple butter. At noon he stalked heavily into the kitchen, heading for his dinner. His hand froze on the doorknob, his face numb with shock. The table wasn't set, and Ada and Lou Ellen, their outdoor coats buttoned against the chill, were playing checkers. They had their gloves on.

"Your move, Mama," Lou Ellen said.

"Where's my dinner at?" Flagg said.

"No firewood," Ada said, crowning Lou Ellen's red king.

"Then get some," Flagg said.

Lou Ellen jumped three of Ada's black counters. "From now on Mama's not toting any more stove kindling."

Ada squirmed off her chair. "I could maybe bring in just one li'l turn of wood."

"No," Lou Ellen said, catching hold of her wrist.

"It's time for my dinner," Flagg said in the lawyer voice he always used when stating a principle, "and I don't see dinner on my table."

Ada sat back down, cautiously, as though the chair had just been painted. "Like she says, Flagg, we're gonna divide up the work round here, so when Lou Ellen goes—"

"She ain't going nowhere," Flagg said.

LOU ELLEN, who had inherited Flagg's spirit and Ada's softness, was like rubber-coated iron. When she smiled up at Flagg, the iron showed through. "I'm getting married," she said, "but not until Mama's shed of the heavy work."

Flagg whirled around. "We'll have dinner in half an hour." He slammed the door behind him.

"Now whatta we do?" Ada said.

Lou Ellen gathered up the checkers. "We'll trade. You take the reds this time. It'll maybe change your luck."

Five games later (Ada lost all five, and twice in the fourth Lou Ellen had to hold her when she tried to run out the back door and hide) Flagg stomped in and dumped the firewood at Ada's feet.

"Ada, honey," he said, "I don't mind fetching and carrying when you're sick."

"She ain't sick," Lou Ellen said.

"Don't be contrary," Flagg said.

"Come to think of it," Ada said, "I do have a li'l headache sorta."

Flagg sat down at the head of the table, with a pleased smile. "I knowed it."

Ada began to make the fire. Her hands trembled as she picked up the kindling. Lou Ellen got out the stewpot, then fixed herself a sandwich and a glass of milk. She never ate much in the middle of the day.

"After dinner," she said, "Mama's gonna rest. You can tend the children."

Flagg drummed the table, squinting up at Lou Ellen. "And just what're *you* gonna be doing?"

"I'm going up to the schoolhouse."

"Oh, no you ain't!"

Lou Ellen put on the galoshes her Uncle Ben had given her last Christmas. "Mama oughtta sleep for at least an hour."

"You come back here and set down."

Lou Ellen opened the back door. She kicked some of the snow from the top step and glanced back at Ada. "Get him to clear us a path."

Flagg sat staring at the closed door.

"Eat your dinner," Ada said.

"I ain't hungry."

"It'll get cold."

"How'd she ever come to meet such a man as that?"

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"Met him at a home demonstration."

Flagg began to pick at the meat in his stew. "I'll have to lock her up a while."

Ada shook her head with a small laugh. "Thas one kinda lock they ain't invented."

Flagg pushed the stew away.

"Snow shovel's leaning up'side the springhouse," Ada said. . . .

Flagg, moving with a dazed mechanical jerkiness, had cleared a path to the red gate when the school bus brought the children home. He had been interrupted by three crises, none of which had drawn Ada from her bed. Cousin Laura's little boy had got in a potato fight with the five-year-old and broken Flagg's fishing lantern. The baby had awakened wet and howling. The three-year-old had burned her knee on the front-room stove. Once, Flagg had shouted for Ada, and she'd called back that she was asleep. She hadn't sounded sleepy.

The children tumbled out of the bus and Flagg, leaning against the shovel, counted them. "There's some missing," he said.

"They got kept in," Eleanor said.

The children scurried up the path and disappeared into the house. It was nearly suppertime before the others got home, and Lou Ellen was not with them. They had walked. They seemed unusually quiet. They dropped their books and empty lunch-boxes in the kitchen, changed into their work clothes and filled the wood box. Edgar and Franklin Roosevelt asked Ada if she'd mind their eating supper standing up.

"Why?" Ada said.

"We'd just rather, thas all."

Nellie Mae sat at Lou Ellen's place at the first table, and after she'd eaten she helped serve the second table, then she dried the dishes and brought the smaller children into the front room. Flagg looked at Nellie Mae as she sat down in Lou Ellen's chair. He shook his head and limped across to the organ. He played The Letter Edged in Black. He didn't sing.

"At our house, we're having a tree," Cousin Laura's boy said. Nellie Mae tried to shush him. "Mama puts colored paper on it."

"Shh."

Flagg turned his head, speaking over his left shoulder. "We don't have to follow the heathen habits of our kin," he said, and swung into The Death of Floyd Collins. He began to hum. Suddenly he stopped and roared for Ada.

"Ada," he said, hopping up and rubbing his hands together, "I'm taking the children outta school."

"You can't. There's a law."

"I'm putting 'em in the town school."

"Ain't no bus to town."

"The county'll have to start running one." He swaggered over to the organ, plopped himself down on the stool and pushed at the pedals as though they were fighting back. "Ada, honey, I'd take me a cup of black coffee and a sugar cooky."

WHEN Lou Ellen got home, it was nearly bedtime. Flagg was playing Ida Red. The older children were just finishing their lessons and the younger ones were dozing off. They roused up quickly, edging by instinct toward a neutral corner, for the new teacher had come in behind Lou Ellen. He was carrying a Christmas tree.

"Well, Mr. Purdy," the new teacher said, "where do you want it?"

Flagg spun around on the organ bench, slid off and stalked out of the room.

"This corner would be nice," Lou Ellen said.

Franklin Roosevelt took the new teacher's hat and coat. Lou Ellen sent Edgar and Orville Wright out to his car to get the boxes on the back seat, then she helped put up the tree. Two of the largest boxes were filled with ornaments, the like of which none of the Purdy children had ever seen, even in catalogue pictures. They unwrapped paper icicles, candy angels, a candle Santa Claus, glass balls and a silver star for the top of the tree.

"You all have such stuff as that?" one of the girls asked Cousin Laura's boy and he shook his head in wonder.

"Just homemade," he said, "not store things."

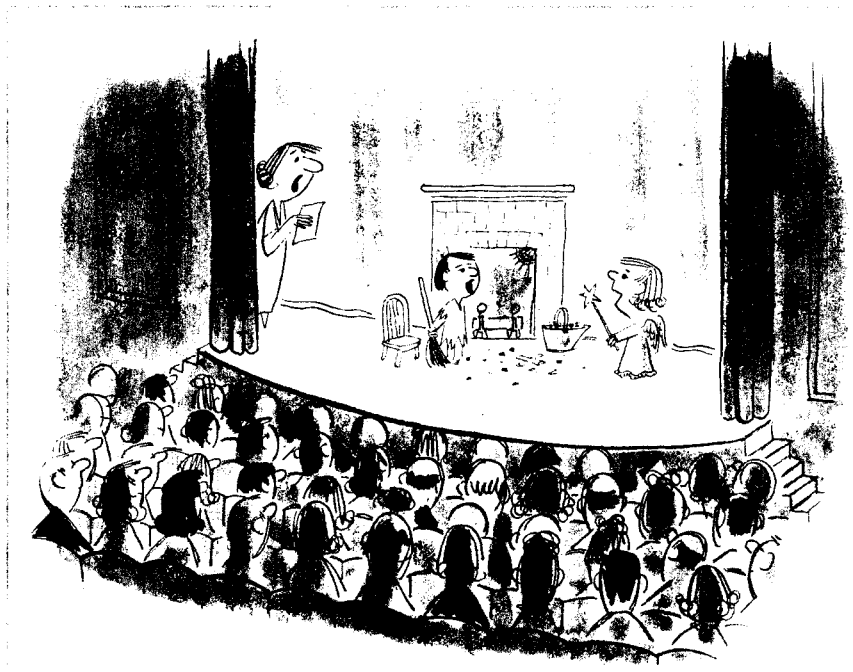
Lou Ellen and Nellie Mae stacked the presents, each with its own card. There were presents for all of the children and for Ada and Flagg. The children got down on all fours, each rooting for his present, and when they found it, they felt it, shook it, held it up to the light. The smaller children just sat holding their presents, as though in fear someone would take them.

"They're not used to all this," Lou Ellen said.

The teacher smiled. "They'll catch on."

Ada came slapping through the hall. She opened the door and gasped, a shine in her eyes.

"It's like a calendar," she said, and when she walked slowly toward the tree, she moved on tiptoe, as though afraid it would vanish if she made any sound. She sat in Flagg's old leather chair. She seemed not even to be breathing.



"Oh, my, who are you?"
"Oh, my, who are you?"
"I'm your fairy godmother . . ."
"I'm your fairy godmother . . ."
"And I've come to find out why you weep so."
"And I've come . . ."

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"Mama, they got a s'prise for you," Eleanor said, and she dug into the brightly wrapped packages under the tree until she found the present with Ada's name on the card. She held it up and Ada nodded. A mist clouded her eyes. Her nose twitched.

"Thas nice, thas real nice," she said, "but for me it don't matter so much. I'm old. I've had my life." She turned to the new teacher. "Only thing that fretted me was watching the children grow up without ever having a fit Christmas."

The new teacher looked around for a place to sit. Lou Ellen's face went red with shame at the sight of the two fabric seats, ripped from gutted jalopies, which, besides Flagg's chair and the organ bench, were the only seats in the room. The floor was littered with candy wrappers, and crumpled catalogue pictures. The new teacher sat on the organ bench, facing Ada.

"Lovely old organ," he said. "Do you play, Mrs. Purdy?"

"Nobody ever learned me, but Lou Ellen plays, her and Mr. Purdy." She hesitated, trying to cover Lou Ellen's embarrassment. "We had a pretty suit of furniture, but Mr. Purdy got in a li'l argument with the installment people."

"I'm making some new curtains," Lou Ellen said.

"She tries to fix up nice," Ada said, "but it's hard when you got so many li'l ones messing and tearing up all the time." She settled back in Flagg's chair. "Now the children got somep'n to remember and pass on when they have young ones of their own."

The new teacher motioned Lou Ellen to sit beside him on the organ bench. He held her hand. "We were going on a honeymoon trip, but we decided to take the money and have a nice family Christmas instead."

Ada nodded happily. "They oughtn't to get old before they've had a chance to be children. Thas what happened to me. I was always older than really."

Flagg thrust open the door. "Bedtime!" he shouted, and the children scrambled up from the floor. They straggled out of the room, glancing back at the tree until Flagg shut the door on it. He walked slowly across the room toward the new teacher, who got up and stood smiling, not flinching. Lou Ellen stood beside him.

"You gonna take that tree outta here," Flagg said, "or do I have to throw it out behind you?"

"It's for the children, Mr. Purdy."

The new teacher was a head taller than Flagg. He was wider in the shoulders and twenty-odd years younger. Flagg kept the black armchair between the new teacher and himself.

"If my children are gonna have pretties for Christmas," Flagg said, "I'll be the one to get 'em."

Ada looked up at Flagg and spoke in a voice he'd never heard her use before: "Flagg Purdy, you touch so much as a needle of that tree, and I'll leave you. I'll take the children and leave you."

The new teacher bowed and smiled. "Good night, Mr. Purdy."

Flagg stood like an oak stump in the center of the room. He could hear Lou Ellen and the new teacher out on the front porch. They were whispering. Lou Ellen laughed, and for a while he couldn't hear anything. He twitched, then he heard the whispering again.

"Ada, you coming to bed?" he said.

"In a little while. I wanta set'n study the tree."

"It's time for bed."

"Mama always had a big tree every year."

Flagg hesitated, then turned away. "Don't set up long."

"I used to cry every New Year's when Papa took the tree down. All us children did."

Flagg woke later that night with a powerful fried-ham thirst, which strained his throat raw. He reached for his glass of water. He almost knocked the lamp over fumbling in the darkness. The glass wasn't there.

"I must of forgot," Ada said, when he nudged her awake.

"I never had such a thirst in my life," Flagg said.

"You'd best go to the pump."

"It wasn't me that forgot."

Flagg argued the principle, and after a while Ada rolled from the bed and padded out of the room, barefoot and shivering. She didn't come back. She slept with Lou Ellen, and when Flagg tried the door, it was locked. He went to the pump. It sounded like a team of horses dredging a creek bottom.

"How can a man make such a fuss getting hissef one li'l glass of water?" Ada said.

Lou Ellen laughed. "It's not the water, Mama, it's the principle of the thing." She pulled the covers tighter around them and they fell asleep almost at once.

IN THE morning Eleanor discovered the tree. She came running back through the house from the front rooms wailing and shrieking, and the other children sprang up and went to see for themselves. Ada stood over the torn tree and the crushed ornaments, and when she looked down, it was like seeing all the hurts of her life lumped together in a green scattering of pine branches and silver paper. Nothing so beautiful had ever come into the house, and Flagg had broken and trampled it. When she saw the tree lying there, she saw herself.

She said nothing. She went back to the bedroom where Flagg lay sleeping and locked the door from the outside. Then she and Lou Ellen made a fire in the kitchen stove and dressed the children. Nellie Mae helped fix the breakfast. Flagg began to pound the bedroom door. He threw something that sounded like the table. The children were crying. They wouldn't eat.

"We're going up to Uncle Ben's," Ada said, and the children quieted down a little. Uncle Ben had an electric radio and Aunt Molly always had a box of candy for them.

As they started out of the house, Lou Ellen stood by the front door, holding the baby and counting the walking children. Ada turned to Franklin Roosevelt and gave him the key to the bedroom. "Soon's we get past the red gate," she told him, "you unlock the door."

"I'd just as lief not," Franklin Roosevelt said.

"Turn the key and run," Ada said. "Run hard." . . .

Ben Purdy, who looked like a soft, fat Flagg with all the fight taken out of him, met Ada and the children as they straggled up to his door a half hour later.

"I've left him," Ada said. "I've took the children and left him."

Ben rumpled Orville Wright's hair and picked up the smallest of the walking girls. He and Molly had no children of their own. Ben was very fond of children.

"I'll call Molly," Ben said, but Molly had heard them, and at the first sight of the young Purdys swarming into the house, she had begun to dart wildly around the room, slapping lace tidies on the furniture, snatching up her good blue dish and her crystal vase, clapping her glass lamp on the mantel above the children's reach. Ada, who envied and loathed the finicky order of the childless house, sniffed distastefully. Molly had done everything but put newspapers down on the floor.

"You should of left him years ago," Molly said.

"I told him I'd do it and I done it," Ada said. "I done what I said."

"Now somep'n like this," Ben said. "It's maybe just the thing to straighten Flagg out."

"Don't be taking up for him," Molly snapped.

Uncle Ben let the boys play the radio, and Aunt Molly gave the girls some cranberries to string for the younger children. They made necklaces and bracelets and Nellie Mae baked gingerbread cutouts.

Ada kept the older children home from school, and Lou Ellen, afraid that Flagg might go storming up to the schoolhouse, tried to call the new teacher on the phone,

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but no one answered. Ada said not to worry. "Flagg's more talk than fight."

Uncle Ben drove Lou Ellen up to the schoolhouse. It was closed. They went over to Mrs. Calkins' house, where the new teacher boarded, and she said he'd left at his usual time and that was the last she'd seen of him. Uncle Ben took Lou Ellen back to the house, then went looking for the new teacher.

Molly was still talking when Lou Ellen came in. "Mean, cranky, stubborn—"

"He's all of that," Ada said. "All of that and more." She and Molly had moved away from the noise of the children and sat huddling around the electric heater in the sewing room. Ada rocked quietly, staring at the red-gold coils of the heater. "Most people get wore down, but not Flagg. Thas his trouble. He won't wear smooth." . . .

Ben had not come back and they had started dinner without him when the new teacher came to the house. He kept his hands jammed in his pockets, and when Molly hurriedly set a place for him, he thanked her and sat down, his hands creeping out of sight beneath the table. He glanced around the room, admiring the old things Molly had bought at auctions.

"Oh, yes," Molly said, "they been in the family for years."

She beamed at Lou Ellen to show her approval of the young man. She piled his plate with cold ham and fried potatoes. She wished she had put out her good dishes, but she hadn't wanted to waste them on the Purdys. When the new teacher reached for his plate, Lou Ellen gasped.

"Just scratched," he said and dug into the ham, trying to hide the torn knuckles of his swollen hand.

Ada stared down at her plate. "You meet up with Flagg?"

"We had a little talk."

"Where's he at?"

"Ben took him into Dr. Dixon's." The teacher accepted another slice of ham.

"Try the bread'n butter pickles," Lou Ellen said.

BEN drove Flagg up to the house in the late afternoon and stayed in the car while Flagg limped up the front steps. When she heard the car, Ada went into the living room and watched him through the window. His face was splotched with white strips, like preserving-jar labels, and one eye was closed behind a puffy purple and yellow mound. His shoulders sagged; he walked like an old man with bone trouble. Ada spoke to him through the locked door. Molly stood beside her. It was Molly who had locked the door.

"You hurt?" Ada said.

"I had a li'l accident. You coming home now?"

"I ain't got any home, me nor the children."

"I got 'em a new tree. Bigger'n the other."

Ada stood staring at the painted wood of the door. It was hard to talk to Flagg through the door, especially with Molly standing there.

"I fixed it up pretty," Flagg said. "I got fancy things from town."

"Where'd you get the money?"

It was quiet for a moment outside, then Flagg coughed and said, "Never you mind, honey, I got it."

"Outta my sugar bowl?"

"No. Me'n Ben come to a 'greement. I'm taking him on as a working partner."

Molly laughed shrilly. *"You—you're* taking *him* on!"

"We worked things out," Flagg said.

The children crept quietly into the room, huddling by the windows to peer out at Flagg. One of the smaller girls began to cry. When the new teacher came in with Lou Ellen, the boys made room for him at the front window. They backed up against the walls, their eyes wide with awe of the man who had done this thing.

"Can I drive you home now, Mrs. Purdy?" the new teacher said.

"I'd take it as a favor, thank you."

"You surely ain't going back to him," Molly shrieked.

ADA motioned Nellie Mae to help Lou Ellen bundle up the children, then she moved slowly across the room she had always envied. The floor was littered with cranberry beads, crumbs, and colored pictures torn from magazines. A dish lay broken on the rug. There were child-high fingerprints on the rose wallpaper. She picked the baby up from the couch.

"If it was me," Molly said, folding her arms over her flat bosom, "I'd have more pride."

Ada cradled the baby in her arms, tucking the cotton blanket around the wizened face. "Pride's an empty thing to have."

Molly gave a snort of disgust. "I'd never put up with it, not for a minute. Him'n his big talk."

"He talks big 'cause he thinks big." Ada stared across Molly's head at the far wall where a picture hung slightly askew. "A man thas got as many principles as Flagg, some of 'em is bound to be wrong."

Molly straightened the picture, then irritably jerked her easy chair back in place, patting the lace tidies smooth across the arms. She began to brush crumbs from the couch, feeling to see if the baby had left a damp spot. "Trouble is, you didn't get Flagg broke in right." She dropped to one knee, her fingers nibbling at the scattering of beads and broken bits of china. She seemed eager for Ada to see her room in order again, the way it had been before the children came. "When we was first married, Ben had a streak of that same Purdy cussedness, but I sure took it out of him quick. Now he's gentle as a kitten."

Ada, framed in a swirl of children, stood, watching the thin, pecking fingers. "Well," she said, "I s'pose it all depends on what you want, a kitten or a man." THE END

Christmas Every Day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

her young-lady sister's with a new silk umbrella, and her papa's and mama's with potatoes and pieces of coal wrapped up in tissue, just as they had every Christmas.

Then she waited around till the rest of the family were up, and she was the first to burst into the library, when the doors were opened, and look at the large presents laid out on the library table—books, and portfolios, and boxes of stationery, and breastpins, and dolls, and little stoves, and dozens of handkerchiefs, and inkstands, and skates, and snow shovels, and photograph frames, and little easels, and boxes of water colors, and Turkish paste, and nougat, and candied cherries, and dolls' houses, and waterproofs—and the big Christmas tree, lighted and standing in a wastebasket in the middle.

She had a splendid Christmas all day. She ate so much candy that she did not want any breakfast; and the whole forenoon the presents kept pouring in that the expressman had not had time to deliver the night before; and she went round giving the presents she had got for other people, and came home and ate turkey and cranberry for dinner, and plum pudding and nuts and raisins and oranges and more candy, and then went out and coasted, and came in with a stomach-ache, crying; and her papa said he would see if his house was turned into that sort of fool's paradise another year; and they had a light supper, and pretty early everybody went to bed cross.

Here the little girl pounded her papa in the back again.

"Well, what now? Did I say pigs?"

"You made them act like pigs."

"Well, didn't they?"

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"No matter; you oughtn't to put it into a story."

"Very well, then I'll take it all out."

Her father went on:

The little girl slept very heavily, and she slept very late, but she was wakened at last by the other children dancing round her bed with their presents in their hands.

"What is it?" said the little girl, and she rubbed her eyes and tried to rise up in bed.

"Christmas! Christmas! Christmas!" they all shouted, and waved their stockings.

"Nonsense! It was Christmas yesterday."

Her brothers and sisters just laughed.

"We don't know about that. It's Christmas today, anyway. You come into the library and see."

Then all at once it flashed on the little girl that the Fairy was keeping her promise, and her year of Christmases was beginning. She was dreadfully sleepy, but she sprang up like a lark—a lark that had overeaten itself and gone to bed cross—and darted into the library. There it was again! Books, and portfolios, and boxes of stationery, and breastpins—

"You needn't go over it all, Papa; I guess I can remember just what was there," said the little girl.

Well, and there was the Christmas tree blazing away, and the family picking out their presents, but looking pretty sleepy, and her father perfectly puzzled, and her mother ready to cry. "I'm sure I don't see how I'm to dispose of all these things," said her mother, and her father said it seemed to him they had had something just like it the day before, but he supposed he must have dreamed it. This struck the little girl as the best kind of a joke; and so she ate so much candy she didn't want any breakfast, and went round carrying presents, and had turkey and cranberry for dinner, and then went out and coasted, and came in with a—

"Papa!"

"Well, what now?"

"What did you promise, you forgetful thing?"

"Oh! Oh yes!"

Well, the next day, it was just the same thing over again, but everybody getting crosser; and at the end of a week's time so many people had lost their tempers that you could pick up lost tempers anywhere; they perfectly strewed the ground. Even when people tried to recover their tempers they usually got somebody else's, and it made the most dreadful mix.

The little girl began to get frightened, keeping the secret all to herself; she wanted to tell her mother, but she didn't dare to; and she was ashamed to ask the Fairy to take back her gift, it seemed ungrateful and ill-bred, and she thought she would try to stand it, but she hardly knew how she could, for a whole year. So it went on and on, and it was Christmas on Saint Valentine's Day and Washington's Birthday, just the same as any day, and it didn't skip even the First of April, though everything was counterfeit that day, and that was some little relief.

After a while coal and potatoes began to be awfully scarce, so many had been wrapped up in tissue paper to fool papas and mamas with. Turkeys got to be about a thousand dollars apiece—

"Papa!"

"Well, what?"

"You're beginning to fib."

"Well, two thousand, then."

And they got to passing off almost anything for turkeys—half-grown hummingbirds, and even rocs out of The Arabian Nights—the real turkeys were so scarce. And cranberries—well, they asked a diamond apiece for cranberries. All the woods and orchards were cut down for Christmas trees, and where the woods and orchards used to be it looked just like a stubble field.

After a while they had to make Christmas trees out of rags, and stuff them with bran, like old-fashioned dolls; but there were plenty of rags, because people got so poor, buying presents for one another, that they couldn't get any new clothes, and they just wore their old ones to tatters. They got so poor that everybody had to go to the poorhouse, except the confectioners, and the fancy-store keepers, and the picture-book sellers, and the expressmen; and they all got so rich and proud that they would hardly wait upon a person when he came to buy. It was perfectly shameful!

Well, after it had gone on about three or four months, the little girl, whenever she came into the room in the morning and saw those great, ugly, lumpy stockings dangling at the fireplace, and the disgusting presents around everywhere, used to just sit down and burst out crying. In six months she was perfectly exhausted; she couldn't even cry any more; she just lay on the lounge and rolled her eyes and panted. About the beginning of October she took to sitting down on dolls whenever she found them—French dolls, or any kind—she hated the sight of them so; and by Thanksgiving she was crazy, and just slammed her presents across the room.

By that time people didn't carry presents around nicely any more. They flung them over the fence, or through the window, or anything; and, instead of running their tongues out and taking great pains to write "For dear Papa," or "Mama," or "Brother," or "Sister," or "Susie," or "Sammie," or "Billie," or "Bobbie," or "Jimmie," or "Jennie," or whoever it was, and troubling to get the spelling right, and then signing their names, they used to write in the gift books, "Take it, you horrid old thing!" and then go and bang it against the front door.

Nearly everybody had built barns to hold their presents, but pretty soon the barns overflowed, and then they used to let them lie out in the rain, or anywhere. Sometimes the police used to come and tell them to shovel their presents off the sidewalks.

"I thought you said everybody had gone to the poorhouse," interrupted the little girl.

"They did go, at first," said her papa; "but after a while the poorhouse got so full that they had to send the people back to their own houses. They tried to cry, when they got back, but they couldn't make the least sound."

"Why couldn't they?"

"Because they had lost their voices, saying 'Merry Christmas' so much. Did I tell you how it was on the Fourth of July?"

"No. How was it?" And the little girl nestled closer, in expectation of something uncommon.

Well, the night before, the boys stayed up to celebrate, as they always do, and fell asleep before twelve o'clock, as usual, expecting to be wakened by the bells and cannon. But it was nearly eight o'clock before the first boy in the United States woke up, and then he found out what the trouble was. As soon as he could get his clothes on he ran out of the house and smashed a big cannon-torpedo down on the pavement; but it didn't make any more noise than a damp wad of paper; and after he tried about twenty or thirty more, he began to pick them up and look at them.

Every single torpedo was a big raisin! Then he just streaked it upstairs, and examined his firecrackers and toy pistol and two-dollar collection of fireworks, and found that they were nothing but sugar and candy painted up to look like fireworks! Before ten o'clock every boy in the United States found out that his Fourth of July things had turned into Christmas things; and then they just sat down and cried—they were so mad. There are about twenty million boys in the United States, and so you can imagine what a noise they made.

Some men got together before night, with a little powder that hadn't turned into purple sugar yet, and they said they would fire off one cannon, anyway. But the cannon burst into a thousand pieces, for it was nothing but rock candy, and some of the men nearly got killed. The Fourth of July orations turned into Christmas carols, and when anybody tried to read the Declaration, instead of saying, "When, in the Course of human events it becomes necessary," he was sure to sing, "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen." It was just awful.

The little girl drew a deep sigh of satisfaction. "How was it at Thanksgiving?"

Her papa hesitated. "Well, I'm almost afraid to tell you. I'm afraid you'll think it's wicked."

"Well, tell, anyway," said the little girl.

Well, before it came Thanksgiving it had leaked out who had caused all these Christmases. The little girl had suffered so much that she had talked about it in her sleep; and after that hardly anybody would play with her. People just perfectly despised her, because if it had not been for her greediness it wouldn't have happened; and now, when it came Thanksgiving, and she wanted them to go to church, and have squash pie and turkey, and show their gratitude, they said that all the turkeys had been eaten up for her old Christmas dinners, and if she would stop the Christmases, they would see about the gratitude. Wasn't it dreadful!

And the very next day the little girl began to send letters to the Christmas Fairy, and then telegrams, to stop it. But it didn't do any good; and then she got to calling at the Fairy's house, but the girl that came to the door always said, "Not at home," or, "Engaged," or, "At dinner," or something like that; and so it went on till it came to the old once-a-year Christmas Eve. The little girl fell asleep, and when she woke up in the morning—

"She found it was all nothing but a dream," suggested the little girl.

"No, indeed! It was all every bit true!"

"Well, what did she find out, then?"

"Why, that it wasn't Christmas at last, and wasn't ever going to be, any more. Now it's time for breakfast."

The little girl held her papa fast around the neck. "You shan't go if you're going to leave it so!"

"How do you want it left?"

"Christmas once a year."

"All right," said her papa; and he went on.

Well, there was the greatest rejoicing all over the country, and it extended clear up into Canada. The people met together everywhere, and kissed and cried for joy. The city carts went around and gathered up all the candy and raisins and nuts, and dumped them into the river; and it made the fish perfectly sick; and the whole United States, as far out as Alaska, was one blaze of bonfires, where the children were burning up their presents. They had the greatest time!

The little girl went to thank the old Fairy because she had stopped its being Christmas, and she said she hoped she would keep her promise and see that Christmas never, never came again. Then the Fairy frowned, and asked her if she was sure she knew what she meant; and the little girl asked her, "Why not?" and the old Fairy said that now she was behaving just as greedily as ever, and she'd better look out.

This made the little girl think it all over carefully again, and she said she would be willing to have it Christmas about once in a thousand years; and then she said a hundred, and then she said ten, and at last she got down to one. Then the Fairy said that was the good old way that had pleased people ever since Christmas began, and she was agreed. Then the little girl said, "What're your shoes made of?" and the Fairy said, "Leather." And the little girl said, "Bargain's done forever," and hippety-hopped the whole way home, she was so glad.

"How will that do?" asked the papa.

"First-rate!" said the little girl; but she hated to have the story stop, and was rather sober. However, her mama put her head in at the door, and asked her papa:

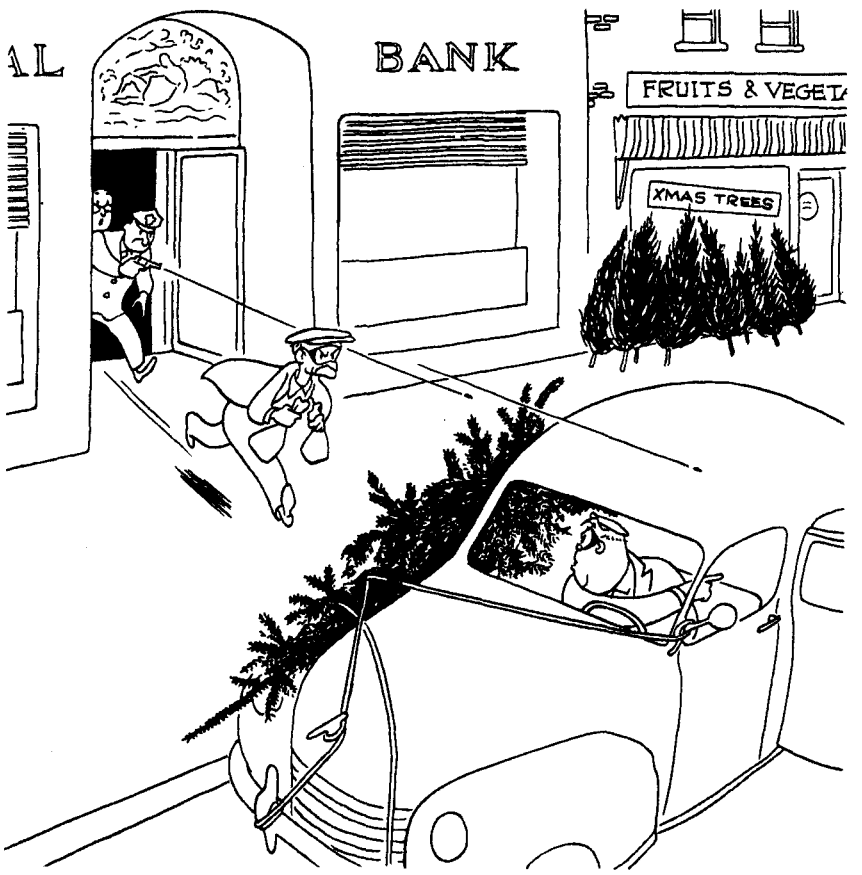
"Are you never coming to breakfast? What have you been telling that child?"

"Oh, just a moral tale."

The little girl caught him around the neck again.

"We know! Don't you tell what, Papa! Don't you tell what!" THE END

BUTCH



COLLIER'S "Around this side, Slug. I done a little shoppin' whilst you was in the bank" LARRY REYNOLDS

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A Miserable, Merry Christmas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

›y myself, I wept. My mother came out to me ›y and by; she found me in my pony stall, ~bbing on the floor, and she tried to comfort ne. But I heard my father outside; he had ›ome part way with her, and she was having ›ome sort of angry quarrel with him. She tried o comfort me; besought me to come to breakast. I could not; I wanted no comfort and ıo breakfast. She left me and went on into he house with sharp words for my father.

I don't know what kind of breakfast the amily had. My sisters said it was "awful." They were ashamed to enjoy their own toys. They came to me, and I was rude. I ran away rom them. I went around to the front of the ıouse, sat down on the steps, and, the crying ›ver, I ached. I was wronged, I was hurt—I :an feel now what I felt then, and I am sure hat if one could see the wounds upon our ıearts, there would be found still upon mine ı scar from that terrible Christmas morning.

"Get down," I said, running out to him.

He went on saying something about "ought to have got here at seven o'clock; told me to bring the nag here and tie him to your post and leave him for you. But, hell, I got into a drunk—and a fight—and a hospital, and—"

"Get down," I said.

He got down, and he boosted me up to the saddle. He offered to fit the stirrups to me, but I didn't want him to. I wanted to ride.

"What's the matter with you?" he said, angrily. "What you crying for? Don't you like the horse? He's a dandy, this horse. I know him of old. He's fine at cattle; he'll drive 'em alone."

I hardly heard, I could scarcely wait, but he persisted. He adjusted the stirrups, and then, finally, off I rode, slowly, at a walk, so happy, so thrilled, that I did not know what I was doing. I did not look back at the house or the man. I rode off up the street, taking note of everything—of the reins, of the pony's long mane, of the carved leather saddle. I had never seen anything so beautiful. And mine!

I was going to ride up past Miss Kay's house. But I noticed on the horn of the saddle some stains like raindrops, so I turned and trotted home, not to the house but to the stable. There was the family, Father, Mother, sisters, all working for me, all happy. They had been putting in place the tools of my new business: blankets, currycomb, brush, pitchfork—everything, and there was hay in the loft.

"What did you come back so soon for?" somebody asked. "Why didn't you go on riding?"

I pointed to the stains. "I wasn't going to get my new saddle rained on," I said. And my father laughed. "It isn't raining," he said. "Those are not raindrops."

"They are tears," my mother gasped, and she gave my father a look which sent him off to the house. Worse still, my mother offered to wipe away the tears still running out of my eyes. I gave her such a look as she had given him, and she went off after my father, drying her own tears. My sisters remained and we all unsaddled the pony, put on his halter, led him to his stall, tied and fed him. It began really to rain; so all the rest of that memorable day we curried and combed that pony. The girls plaited his mane, forelock and tail, while I pitchforked hay to him and curried and brushed, curried and brushed.

For a change we brought him out to drink; we led him up and down, blanketed like a race horse; we took turns at that. But the best, the most inexhaustible fun, was to clean him. When we went reluctantly to our midday Christmas dinner, we all smelled of horse, and my sisters had to wash their faces and hands. I was asked to, but I wouldn't, till my mother bade me look in the mirror. Then I washed up—quick. My face was caked with the muddy lines of tears that had coursed over my cheeks to my mouth. Having washed away that shame, I ate my dinner, and as I ate I grew hungrier and hungrier.

It was my first meal that day, and as I filled up on the turkey and the stuffing, the cranberries and the pies, the fruits and the nuts—as I swelled, I could laugh. My mother said I still choked and sobbed now and then, but I laughed, too; I saw and enjoyed my sisters' presents till— I had to go out and attend to my pony, who was there, really and truly there, the promise, the beginning, of a happy double life. And—I went and looked to make sure—there was the saddle, too, and the bridle.

But that Christmas, which my father had planned so carefully, was it the best or the worst I ever knew? He often asked me that; I never could answer as a boy. I think now that it was both. It covered the whole distance from broken-hearted misery to bursting happiness—too fast. A grownup could hardly have stood it. THE END

And my father, the practical joker, he must ıave been hurt, too, a little. I saw him looking out of the window. He was watching me ›r something for an hour or two, drawing ›ack the curtain ever so little lest I catch him, ›ut I saw his face, and I think I can see now he anxiety upon it, the worried impatience.

After—I don't know how long—surely an ıour or two—I was brought to the climax of ny agony by the sight of a man riding a pony down the street, a pony and a brand-new saddle; the most beautiful saddle I ever saw, ınd it was a boy's saddle; the man's feet were ıot in the stirrups; his legs were too long. The outfit was perfect; it was the realization ›f all my dreams, the answer to all my prayers. A fine new bridle, with a light curb bit. And he pony!

As he drew near, I saw that the pony was really a small horse, what we called ın Indian pony, a bay, with black mane and ail, and one white foot and a white star on ıis forehead. For such a horse as that I would ıave given, I could have forgiven, anything.

But the man, a disheveled fellow with a blackened eye and a fresh-cut face, came ılong, reading the numbers on the houses, ınd, as my hopes—my impossible hopes—rose, he looked at our door and passed by, ıe and the pony, and the saddle and the ›ridle. Too much. I fell upon the steps, and, ıaving wept before, I broke now into such a flood of tears that I was a floating wreck when I heard a voice.

"Say, kid," it said, "do you know a boy ıamed Lennie Steffens?" I looked up. It was he man on the pony, back again, at our horse ›lock.

"Yes," I spluttered through my tears. "That's me."

"Well," he said, "then this is your horse. I've been looking all over for you and your ıouse. Why don't you put your number where it can be seen?"

Keeping Ahead of the Joneses

We used to boast because our horse
Was speedier and stronger.
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WALTER BOMAR

Christmas Is Our Way of Life

CHRISTMAS DOES SOMETHING quite miraculous to most of us. We may go to bed the night before weary of crowds and rush and dozens of last-minute chores, and fed up with the whole business. And then we arise on the day itself to find ourselves transformed almost as remarkably as Scrooge was, and without any ghostly assistance.

If we have small children we find that we love them, even though they wakened us at dawn. The sense of family unity becomes something to be newly cherished. We greet our friends with uncritical affection. Our hearts go out to all our fellow men, and we wish them well.

We do not do these things because we are compelled to or because tradition says we ought to. We do them simply because the spirit of Christmas is upon us. Peace and good will, familiar words of the Christmas story, suddenly become positive and meaningful.

The good will recedes, the peace is disturbed, and we go back to the strivings and the differences of everyday life. But the spirit of Christmas does not disappear. It is a part of us, part of our heritage and of our national as well as individual behavior.

Sometimes it seems that we Americans forget, in our zeal for progress and improvement, that we are a decent, kindly people. We seem to forget how good a life most of us have, and why we have it.

It is right that we should try to improve that life and share its goodness more evenly. But in doing that we sometimes tend to emphasize our disagreements and to take our blessings and our virtues for granted.

The Christmas season is a good time to remember that we live in a nation that was founded on Christian ethics as well as on political justice. It was built upon the Christian belief in the worth and dignity of the individual.

That belief is absent this Christmas from many countries. In some, the brotherhood of man has been replaced by government edicts of suspicion, betrayal and class hatred. In others, conformity and obedience are demanded by a program whose goal seems to be a drab uniformity masquerading as social equality. And even in our own country there are people who would have us emulate the one system or the other.

We have not done so, and let us give thanks for it. Let us look about us and within us and count our very palpable blessings. Let us remember that, for all our shortcomings, we embody for the rest of the world the charity and generosity and good will that are the essence of the Christian and the Christmas spirit. Christmas is not an American institution or an American holiday. But we have patterned our best aspirations after its meaning until it has become not only one day in our year but, in a sense, our way of life.

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1 Gift for a golfer? Balls? What brand—?
2 Fisherman. A reel? What kind? And what type—?
3 Hunter. Gun? Shells? Hm-mm ..... what gauge?
4 Gardener. Seeds? But what is it he grows—?
5 Camera fan. Filters? What kinds and sizes—?
6 Yachtsman. A Barometer? Binoculars? Charts?
7 Craftsman. Loves tools. What is it he needs?
8 Music lover. Records? Classical or boogie-woogie?
9 Bookworm. A book, of course —but what book?
10 Collector. But what, exactly, does he collect?
11 Horseman. A saddle? Spurs? —but what type?
12 He-who-has everything... Hardest of all!

The "case" that solves 12 Christmas mysteries!

12 MYSTERIES: What to give 12 different men with different tastes and interests?

Hint: Each of the twelve men likes fine whiskey.

Solution: Just *one* quick, easy purchase... a case of 12 bottles of Hunter... and all 12 men receive something they really *want!* For Hunter's subtly *different* flavor gives it the true *distinction* every fine gift should possess. And it's easy to *find* wherever fine liquors are sold!

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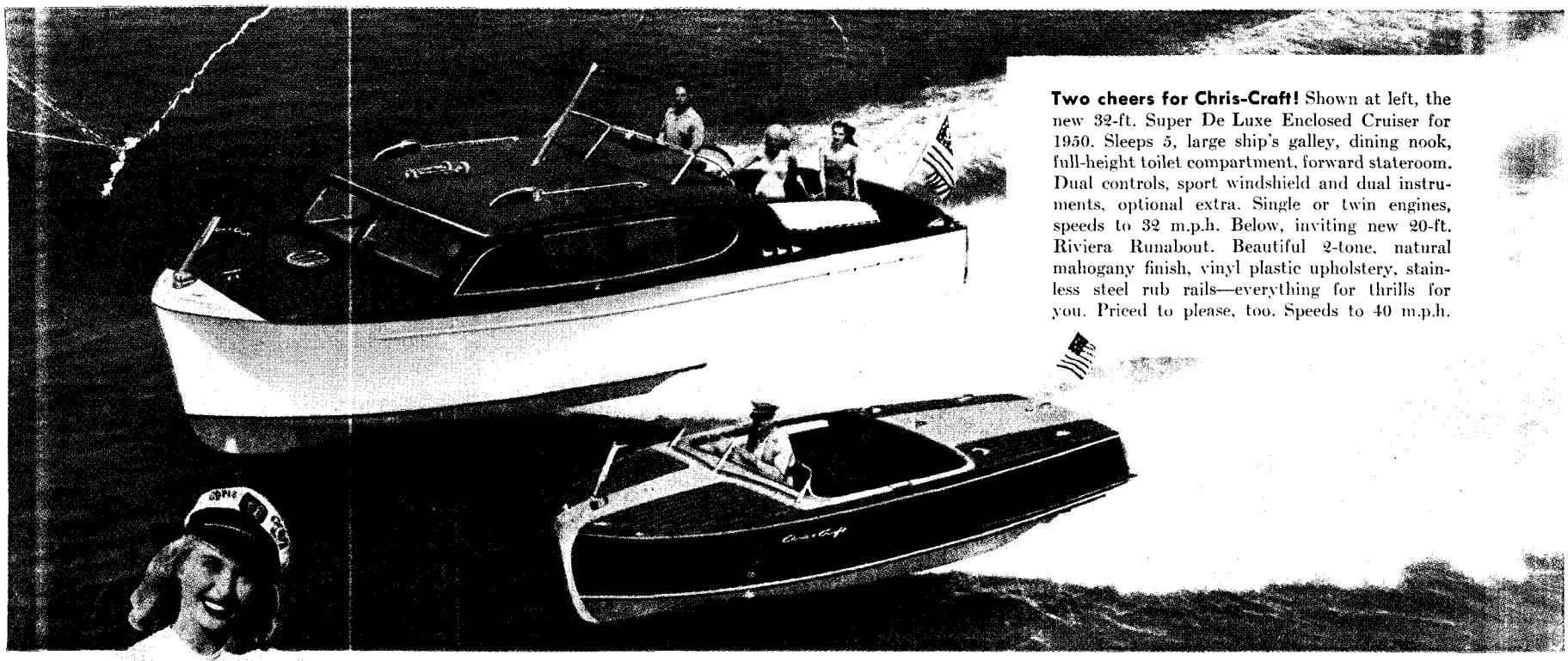
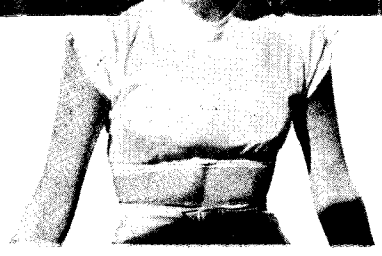


Two cheers for Chris-Craft! Shown at left, the new 32-ft. Super De Luxe Enclosed Cruiser for 1950. Sleeps 5, large ship's galley, dining nook, full-height toilet compartment, forward stateroom. Dual controls, sport windshield and dual instruments, optional extra. Single or twin engines, speeds to 32 m.p.h. Below, inviting new 20-ft. Riviera Runabout. Beautiful 2-tone, natural mahogany finish, vinyl plastic upholstery, stainless steel rub rails—everything for thrills for you. Priced to please, too. Speeds to 40 m.p.h.



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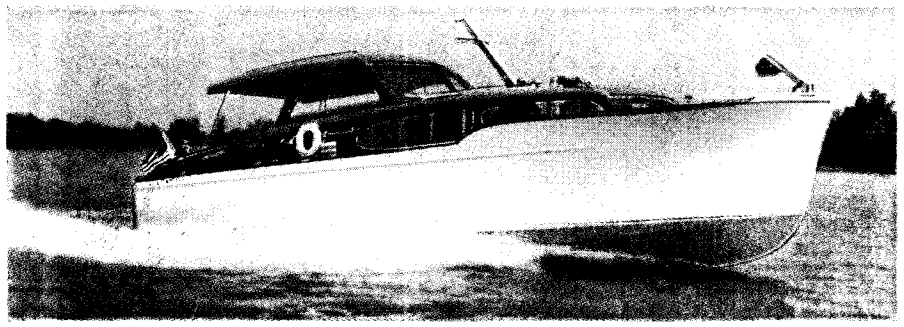
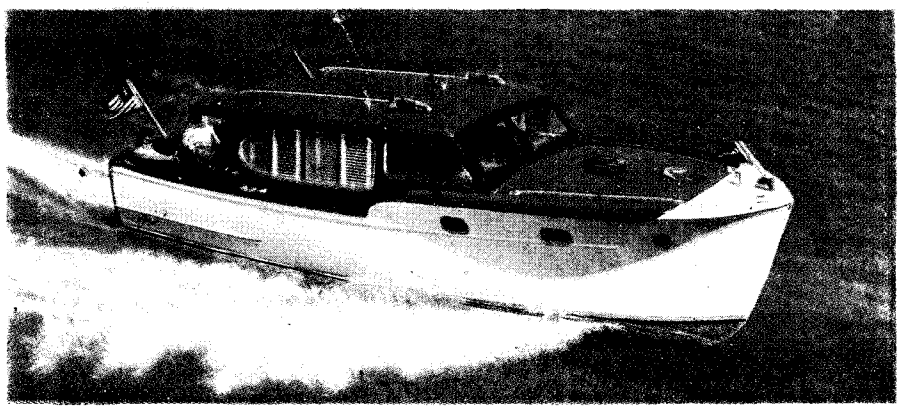
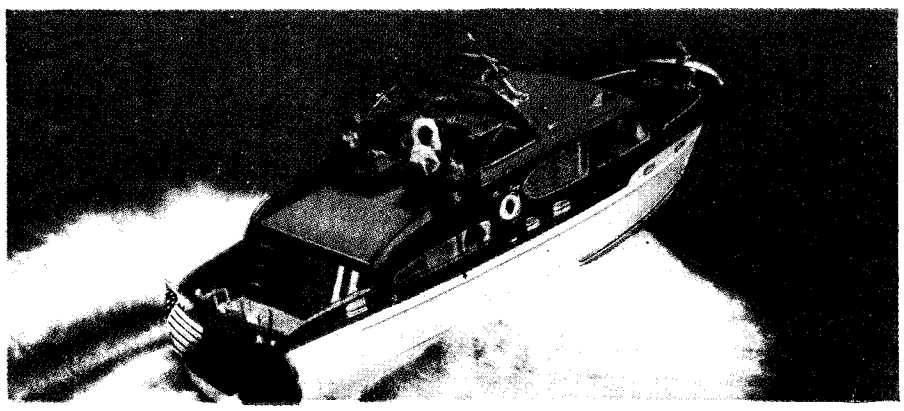


Brand-new popular design for 1950—34-ft. Commander. Large, light, airy cabin; 2 staterooms; sleeps 6; dinette; complete galley; toilet compartment; big aft cockpit; wide cruising radius; single or twin engines; speeds to 30 m.p.h.

For fun, fishing, water skiing and utility use, buy this 1950 Chris-Craft 18-ft. Sportsman. Beautifully proportioned, plenty of cockpit space, natural mahogany finish. Speeds to 35 m.p.h. Folding top with side curtains, optional extra.



For more of everything in life, get aboard this new 33-ft. De Luxe Enclosed Cruiser for 1950. Sleeps 4; convenient galley; toilet compartment; spacious deckhouse; aft cockpit; economical to run; single or twin engines; speeds to 25 m.p.h.



New 41-ft. Flying Bridge Cruiser for 1950. Sleeps 8 in 4 private staterooms. Inside passage from deckhouse to bridge; inviting galley; big deckhouse; toilets, fore and aft; twin engines; speeds to 24 m.p.h. Dual controls, optional extra.

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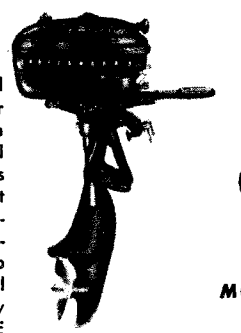

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